MODERN MUSICIANS by J. Cuthbert HADDEN

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MODERN MUSICIANS

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MODERN MUSICIANS

A BOOK FOR PLAYERS SINGERS & LISTENERS

BY J. CUTHBERT HADDEN
AUTHOR OF "MASTER MUSICIANS," ETC.

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO MY FRIEND

MISS DOROTHY WARD

PREFACE

THIS is a companion volume to the writer's *Master Musicians*, published in 1909. Like that work, it concerns itself rather with the musicians themselves than with their compositions or their achievements. It does not profess to be technical: indeed, it explicitly avoids the technical, though there is a perhaps excusable suggestion of the technical in the opening chapters. Moreover, the author does not claim to have made a complete, or probably even the best possible selection, of names. Space is limited; and to have included *all* the names familiar to the musical public, would have meant the book resolving itself into a series of dictionary notices. That kind of thing was never in the author's mind, and is repugnant to him.

Here, in a word, are simply some "chapters" in intimate musical biography; written in a popular style, and meant chiefly for popular reading.

The collecting of materials has naturally been difficult, since, with one or two exceptions, no books have been published on the various personalities dealt with. I am greatly indebted to the musical magazines of the last ten or twelve years, and, especially as regards the violinists and 'cellists, to *The Strad*. I gratefully mention also the works of the American writer, Mr. Henry C. Lahee, on Pianists, Singers, and Violinists.

J. C. H.

EDINBURGH,
Midsummer 1913.

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MODERNITY IN MUSICAL COMPOSITION

MODERN MUSICIANS

CHAPTER ONE MODERNITY IN MUSICAL COMPOSITION

THIS, AS HAS BEEN SAID, IS A COMPANION volume to *Master Musicians*. A cynic might be tempted to play upon the two titles, and to suggest, in a significant sarcasm, that the "modern" is not likely to be the "master" musician. And indeed the idea may serve as an excellent starting point.

Somebody once foolishly asserted that Beethoven had spoken the last word in music. Other undiscerning persons have insisted that in Brahms we must recognise the last of the classicists. There can be no such thing as a "last word" in music, any more than in literature, or science, or invention. Composers have ever and again arisen who sought to widen the boundaries of their art; and ever and again such composers will arise. At first the new message is accepted by a few, but is looked upon with suspicion, and even hostility, by the majority. That is only natural. When the course of art is to be altered, those who have been walking by the river for long, and complacently following its flow, generally throw up their arms in protest and anger. The new genius, with new ways, is most likely to find his appreciation among younger and daring spirits.

Musical history offers many striking instances of the kind. Beethoven himself was not gladly received, either by critics or public. Nearly all his earlier works

were roundly abused. When the Seventh Symphony appeared, Weber wrote that "the extravagances of this genius have reached the *ne plus ultra*, and Beethoven is quite ripe for the madhouse." Wagner, now the great god of the music-drama, was for many years derided as a musical mountebank. "He is," said one, "a desperate charlatan, endowed with worldly skill and enough vigorous purpose to persuade a gaping crowd that the nauseous compound he manufactures has some precious inner virtue which they must live and ponder yet ere they perceive." Prosper Mérimée, the author of "Carmen," said he could compose something better than "Tannhäuser" after hearing his cat walk over the piano keyboard.

Even Mendelssohn pronounced Schubert's music diffuse and formless. Wagner put it that Schumann had only a "tendency" towards greatness. Tschaïkowsky, representing an imaginary conversation, said: "Herr Brahms, I consider you a composer ungifted, pretentious, and bereft of creative power. I by no means place you aloft, and I look down upon you with disdain." The works of certain other modern composers were considered by many of their contemporaries eccentric, formless, decadent; hopeless attempts to open up new paths.

That, without further labouring the point, has always been the attitude of the majority towards any new genius. After a time, longer or shorter, accord-

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DEBUSSY

ing to the opportunities of becoming familiar with the new works, the majority diminishes, and finally vanishes. Of course, although many great geniuses have not at once been recognised, it by no means follows that all composers whose procedures are not contemporarily approved of are geniuses. But the recollection of how many of the really great had to fight and to wait for recognition may well serve us as a warning not to be too rash in forming a judgment, especially an adverse one. History teaches us both to be slow to condemn and slow to extol. Not all innovations live, not even all the innovations of geniuses. Many innovations admired for a time by enthusiasts disappear without leaving a trace behind.

Still, one doubts about some of the vaunted living composers. They are living, but *will* they live? "I wonder what they are all trying to accomplish?" said Jean de Reszke recently of the modern composers. "Unless music is ugly and bizarre and tuneless the modern world does not seem to want it. Tschaïkowsky, Verdi, Weber, the great symphonists, none of them are considered anything to-day. As for Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini, they are looked upon not as men of talent, but as blots on the world of art. Even Wagner is getting to be looked upon as old-fashioned, especially his early works."

Mr. Frederick Delius says that Strauss is dished up Wagner with twice as much devil and not half the

inspiration. "Debussy, Sibelius, and Puccini are not great: our creative musical product to-day is sick for want of feeling, full of doubt, dismay, self-distrust, blatant self-assertion."

There may be some exaggeration in all this, but there is also much truth. Quite recently there was heard at Queen's Hall, London, an orchestral composition called "Prometheus: a Poem of Fire," by the Russian composer Scriabine. The composer solemnly announced that the thing had to be heard *five times* before any one could understand it! It was actually played twice at the same concert, but most of those who heard it the first time fled before the repetition came on. Here was what a leading critic wrote about it:

"He begins with 'primordial chaos,' and the impression left on me is that he never gets out of it. The orchestra snored, groaned, and grunted in a manner that might have aptly illustrated a hippopotamus enjoying a mud bath. Anon there were sounds suggestive of an escape of steam, then some perky notes were shot out by a trumpet with comic effect, and presently some despairing wails from a solo violin seemed to be answered by gibes from the pianoforte, which, with the organ, is also included in the score. Towards the end the cacophony became unbearable."

If this is modernity in music, obviously we do not want it. One really begins to wonder whether the writing of melody is a lost art. A music critic remarked not

long ago, avowedly after a surfeiting dose of Strauss, Debussy, and Company, that "tunes are despised nowadays." Tunes are certainly not despised by those who like to listen to music, but there is some ground for believing that they are despised by the creators of what, in these times, is often taken for music. Scarcely a composer of any standing in Europe would dream of writing a haunting melody, assuming that he *could* write it. Become a mere Gounod, a Balfe, a Bellini? No, no; positive ugliness were better than that! And Sir Hubert Parry was never more sane than when he said that ugliness in musical composition is chiefly the makeshift of melodic incapacity.

Vincent Wallace, the composer of "Maritana," talking once to a friend about "rising composers," declared that there was "not the ghost of a tune in the whole lot." The observation was made sixty years ago. What would Wallace say about composers risen and rising now? After all, Haydn was right. "Let your air be good," said the old master, "and your composition, whatever it be, will be so likewise, and will assuredly delight. It is the soul of music, the life, the spirit, the essence of a composition. Without it theorists may succeed in discovering and using the most singular chords and combinations, but nothing is heard but a laboured sound, which, though it may please the ears, leaves the head empty and the heart cold and unaffected by it." He knew what he

was talking about, this melodic father of the symphony, and there is no gainsaying him, even to-day.

Why does such a work as "The Bohemian Girl" retain its phenomenal popularity with the opera-going masses? Not because it is in any sense a "great" work. Its orchestration is thin and feeble, its dramatic grip of a rather elementary kind. It has no depth of thought, no intellectual aim. Nevertheless, a performance always gives real and abundant pleasure. And why? Just because of the sheer tunefulness of the work. It is a string of melodic pearls. Strauss, senior, called Balfe the "king of melody," and he was right. These airs of his are pure and natural, written spontaneously, without, as it would seem, the slightest effort. Pedantry may sneer at them, but they have a way of finding out the tender spots in the human heart.

Well, to return, what of the modern men? Will they "compel" the heart of the average musical amateur, as Balfe and Wallace and the rest did? Who can say? In a letter to a friend, Verdi, the composer of "Il Trovatore" and many another popular opera, once wrote: "For an artist who addresses himself to the public, it is good fortune when the press is against him. The artist remains thus independent. He has no need to lose his time thanking one or the other, or to reflect on their counsels. He writes freely, following the dictates of his mind and heart, and if he has it in him, he does something, and he does it well."

ON MUSICAL COMPOSITION

What more need be said by way of introduction? In recent years two composers especially have presented us with problems which seem unsolvable at present—the German Richard Strauss, and the Frenchman Claude Debussy. Let us take these two, then, as a sort of bridge carrying us over from the "master" to the "modern" musician. And we may do it with the more instruction to ourselves that the two men are in their natures, as well as in their music, like the poles asunder. Professor Niecks has emphasized this. Strauss, a supreme master of all the resources of the art, to whom the most extraordinary difficulties are child's play, is a personality of boundless vigour and fertility. Work after work flows from his pen with marvellous rapidity, and every new one surpasses its predecessor in daring and power. Debussy, on the other hand, a musician of much more limited craftmanship, is a personality without vigour and fertility. Although he is two years older, his output is not a tenth of that of his great contemporary. In short, whereas Strauss is wide awake and alive, indeed tingling with energy, Debussy is dreamy and languid. With Strauss his creations are a white-heat business; with Debussy a lukewarm dilettanteism.

COMPOSERS

CHAP. II. RICHARD STRAUSS

SOME CONFUSION EXISTS IN THE POPULAR mind as to the identity and relationship of the many Strausses who have earned distinction in the musical world. Up to the time when Richard Strauss became well known, the name of Strauss was associated chiefly with the family of waltz composers. But Richard Strauss has no connection with the Johann Strauss who earned the title of father of the Viennese waltz, nor with Johann's more famous son, the so-called "waltz-king," composer of the haunting "Blue Danube."

The Strauss in whom we are now interested, bearing, as he does, the same Christian name as Richard Wagner, is sometimes playfully called Richard II. He was born at Munich in 1864, where his father was a horn player in the Court orchestra. He began the piano at four, and at six wrote a little polka. Before he went to school, he had composed songs, piano pieces, and even an overture for orchestra.

Strauss *père* did everything possible to foster the precocious child's talent, but it is curious to remark, in view of the revolutionary character of Richard's compositions, that the father was such a conservative musician as never to get over his early anti-Wagnerian bias. On one occasion, after he had most exquisitely performed the first horn part in one of Wagner's works, the composer facetiously remarked: "I fancy after all, Strauss, you can't be such an anti-Wagner-

ian as they make out, seeing that you play my music so beautifully." "What has that to do with it?" growled the unrelenting hornist.

Strauss got his first music lessons from his mother, a daughter of Georg Pschorr, the well-known brewer of Munich beer. But the most effective part of his long and thorough musical training was received at the hands of Von Bülow and Alexander Ritter, a man of many and varied accomplishments, who had married a niece of Wagner. He has told himself that until 1885 he had been brought up in a strictly classical way —on Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—that only after 1885 did he attain, *via* Mendelssohn, to Chopin and Schumann and then to Brahms.

Bülow fancied him as a conductor, and in 1885 engaged him as assistant music director of his Meinengen Orchestra. Then, when Bülow left Meinengen, Strauss succeeded him. But this appointment did not last long. After a tour in Italy Strauss returned to Munich in 1886, to be made third kapellmeister at the Opera. That post he held till 1889, when he became assistant kapellmeister at Weimar, under Lassen. Here he remained until 1894, when he returned to Munich, this time as first kapellmeister. In 1898 he left Munich to take up the post of conductor at the Berlin Royal Opera. A year before, he paid his first visit to England, when he conducted two of his own works at Queen's Hall.

Long ere this, he had "found" himself as a composer; and it is as a composer that we are now chiefly concerned with him—the composer of "Salome" and "Elektra," "Der Rosenkavalier," "Heldenleben," and other epoch-making works. What is to be said about them? Nothing technical here, but something of a general nature.

Strauss' ideas about music are certainly original enough. He maintains that the ugly in art is as important and legitimate as the beautiful. Music, he says, in effect, may represent any feature of life. For him there is no absolute beauty or ugliness in music: whatever is truly and sincerely felt, and faithfully and properly reproduced, is beautiful.

In agreement with this opinion, he depicts in "Heldenleben" a battle scene by a cacophonous jumble of unrelated sounds; in "Don Quixote" the hero's charge of a flock of sheep by an imitation of bleating and stampeding, realistic rather than musical. In "Elektra" there are howling steam-whistle effects, and shrieks of the first order given out *fortissimo*. He even terminates the score with a dissonance.

In "Salome" we have morbid and degenerate psychological conditions depicted by means between which and art as understood by the classic masters there is no connection possible. But perhaps Strauss is right after all. As he says himself, ideas of beauty are constantly changing: "the ugly of to-day may be

the beautiful of ten or fifty years hence"; and a creaking hinge or the bray of a donkey be as welcome from an orchestra as a Beethoven symphony is now.

Strauss can himself play nearly every one of the orchestral instruments. The complexity of his works leaves even Wagner behind. He has conducted them in all the capitals of Europe, and has often quite exhausted his players in his powerful upbuilding of climaxes. Some interesting things have been recorded about his methods of composing. He is very fond of playing ball at his Bavarian home, and a friend who has often enjoyed that pastime with him, reveals the fact that themes for his "Rosenkavalier" frequently occurred to him during the game. Every now and then he would stop suddenly, let the ball fall to the ground, take out his note-book, and jot down an idea. Several of the prettiest melodies in the opera came to him in this way. This authority added that in working out his ideas later at the piano the composer is very thorough, often copying or correcting a part half a dozen times; occasionally, indeed, remodelling practically the entire composition four or five times.

He himself says: "Wherever I am I compose. Whether in my quiet country home or in the noisiest international hotel, in the solitude of my own garden or in a railway, my note-book is always at hand. As soon as a suitable motive for the theme which is occupying my mind occurs to me, it is at once en-

trusted to my faithful companion, my musical note-book." This reminds one of Beethoven and his sketch-books, which he always carried about with him. Beethoven had no garden of his own, but delighted in solitary wanderings in Nature's great garden.

Strauss is reported as saying that it is only when a man is free from any thoughts of money matters that he can give himself completely to his art. Commenting on the vast sums he exacts for the rights of performing his works, a captious writer says it is evident that Strauss has not yet arrived at that stage!

Some years ago he married an operatic singer, Pauline de Ahna, daughter of a Bavarian General. When he wrote his "Domestic Symphony" he wished it to be regarded in a serious spirit, and was annoyed by being credited with a desire to be funny and flippant. "What can be more serious than married life?" he demanded. He has indeed a mordant wit. Asked about women conductors, he says: "As women are able to control excellent conductors—namely their husbands—why should they not be equal to the task of directing the orchestras which their husbands control?"

He was dining once with a party of musical friends, when the conversation turned on the compositions of the Kaiser. Some of the guests had expressed their opinions pretty freely, when Herr Strauss put his finger to his lips and said: "Sh! sh! you should never

run down the compositions of crowned heads in company. There is no telling who wrote them."

A modest man, he does not like flattery from his admirers. One insistent sycophant said: "Master, you are the Budda of modern music." "I don't know about that," he replied, "but I do know what is the pest" (Budapest). Naturally, he has little time for hobbies. Lately, however, he took to aviation, which seems the right thing for a composer, who, of course, ought to be an "air" man. Doubtless he will now rise to greater heights than ever!

CHAPTER III. CLAUDE DEBUSSY

"THE DEBUSSY CULT," SAID A LONDON musical journal in 1909, "is making great progress in this country. It has reached that interesting stage when many people who are really desperately bewildered, affect to perceive beauties and wonderful meanings that have probably entirely escaped the attention of the composer himself. But there is no mistaking the depth and width of the influence Debussy is exerting on the art. His music may be classed as nebulous, fragile, diaphonous, and so on, but one cannot resist the languor of the hazy atmosphere with which it envelopes and mesmerises the listener. What one appears to miss is the attribute of strength, and grip, and clearness of purpose. It is nearly always veiled suggestion and an appeal to imaginativeness."

This, even after the lapse of four years, and when we have had many more opportunities of judging Debussy, seems a very fair estimate. Debussy, by his love of freedom and endeavour to shake off the "accumulated dust of tradition" is, to a great extent, a law to himself. The old forms, the old harmonies subject to theoretical laws, the old accepted notion that music ought to be primarily beautiful—all these things are rejected by Debussy as they are rejected by Strauss, though Strauss rejects them in a very different manner.

What strikes one mainly in listening to Debussy's music is (to be technical for once) a sense of the dreamy and the languid, of vagueness and mystery

and "atmosphere," of the predominance of dissonance over consonance, and the treatment of dissonance as not in need of resolution into consonance. An American writer credits him with a lukewarm dilettanteism; and in his criticism of Debussy's chief work, the opera or lyrical drama, "Pelléas and Melisande," claims to characterise the whole man and artist.

He calls the work mooning, mystic and *triste*, and speaks of its invertebrate charm, its innocuous sensuousness, its absence of thematic material, its perverse harmonies, its lack of rhythmic variety, and its faded sweetness, like that evoked by musty tapestry in languid motion. This is not bad either! Of course there are plenty of people who like the dreamy and the "mooning" in music. Mme. Carreño puts it well when she says that "the young musician is fascinated by Debussy as babies are fascinated by coloured balls without knowing what they are."

When Debussy made his first appearance in England in 1908 and conducted three of his own pieces at Queen's Hall, it was written in a musical journal:

"So novel are the effects which M. Debussy obtains from his wonderful scheme of orchestral colour, so elusive is the music, so formless, and yet in a way so graphic, that it is difficult to express an opinion upon a work of this kind after a first hearing. Such atmospheric strains, so unlike what one is accustomed to, must be listened to in a passive frame of mind, perchance in a darkened room. There can be no question

as to the cleverness of the music or its poetic import; the only thing is to get one's ears educated, so to speak, in order to appreciate its strange idiom."

It is as yet too early to fix Debussy's exact niche in the temple of fame; but his works have certainly been gaining ground. His name is constantly seen in programmes of song and piano recitals; his Quartet in G minor is often performed; and "L'Enfant Prodigue" and "La Demoiselle Elen" have been given even at provincial festivals. There is an increased interest, too, in "Pelléas and Melisande," which offers such striking contrast to Wagner's music-dramas. "L'-Apres-midi d'un Faune" has become a favourite since its first English performance in 1904. It was a London critic who, commenting on that performance, was under the impression that "faune" meant fawn, and facetiously inquired what the afternoon thoughts of a young gazelle were likely to be!

Claude Debussy was born at St. Germain-en-Laye in August 1862. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire, where, like so many more of the French opera composers, he took the Prix de Rome. In early youth he was an ardent Wagnerite, but shook off the spell after a sojourn in Russia, where he came under the influence of certain of the ultra-modern native masters.

Though he had written a good deal before that time, it was not until the production of "Pelléas and Melisande" in Paris in 1902 that his claims to attention

were recognised. A *première* at the national Opéra-Comique is always an important event; it attracts the public and is commented upon in all Parisian newspapers, a favour sparingly accorded to concert novelties. Despite many sarcastic criticisms and wholesale depreciations, despite the not unaccountable bewilderment of the public at the first performance, success was not long in coming. Many musicians who at first stood aside, feeling perplexed, have now admitted the beauty of Debussy's lyric drama. Nevertheless he remains one of the men over whom the critics wrangle, as they used to wrangle over Wagner. What they will ultimately make of him remains to be seen, but of his present importance in the world of music there can be no question.

Debussy is delightfully unconventional. He conducted at Queen's Hall in a lounge jacket—and why not? How he sets about giving a recital was told quite recently by Miss Fanny Davies, the pianist. She said: "The Debussy group came second in the programme, and I think it worthy of note that he ordered the lid of the piano to be half closed, as in *ensemble* playing. Then he arrived, quite simply, with his music in his hand, and after arranging it and his chair, he played." Accustomed as we are to seeing pianists make their entry with a somersault or a handspring, the Debussy method seems tame. Quite lately he has entered the field of musical criticism, having agreed to write a monthly article for a leading Paris review.

CHAPTER FOUR SAINT-SAËNS

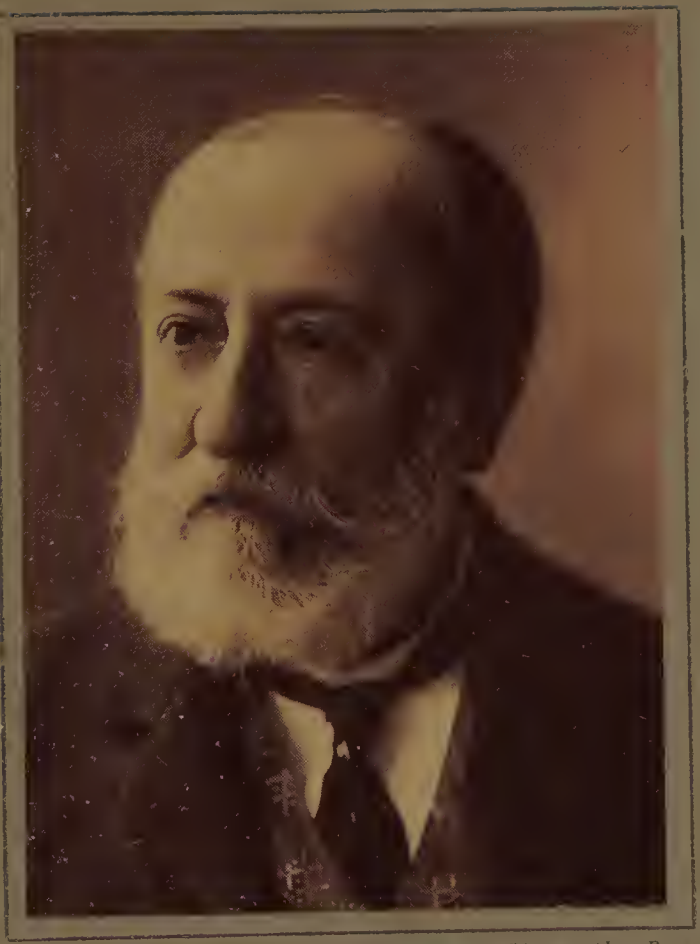
M. CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS IS THE MOST versatile of all living musicians—a great composer, a great pianist, a great organist, a writer of distinction on his art, and the author of much charming verse. Wagner spoke of him as "the greatest living French composer," and Gounod constantly expressed his admiration of his phenomenal gifts, remarking that he could write at will a work in the style of Rossini, Verdi, Schumann, and Wagner. Von Bülow was amazed at the vast extent of his knowledge, and, in fact, said: "There does not exist a monument of art of whatsoever country, school, or epoch that Saint-Saëns has not thoroughly studied."

There is no other living French composer whose music is so often given and so much admired in England. His "Samson and Delilah," performed here from 1893 to 1909 as an oratorio, was popular; but afterwards when given on the stage, its great merit was more fully recognised. As a pianist, he has often been heard. In that character he was once thought to rival Liszt. They say that at Bayreuth, when Saint-Saëns was at the height of his Wagner enthusiasm, he sat one evening at the piano, in the presence of a large company of the world's musical notables, and played from the orchestral score one of the Acts of "Parsifal," and also from the score of "The Ring." The former work was then unknown, and his arrangement and reading were at first sight. His execution is prodigious, and his lightness of touch quite unique.

Saint-Saëns' biography may be briefly summarised. He is a French Jew, born in Paris in 1835. He says himself that at two-and-a-half years of age he showed musical tendencies. At five he composed waltzes and romances, and loved to listen to the singing of the kettle. At ten he led an orchestra, and played Mozart and Beethoven by heart.

Then he entered the Paris Conservatoire, and had lessons in composition from Gounod. When only seventeen he was appointed organist of St. Merry; and in 1858 he succeeded Lefébure-Wely as organist at the Madeleine in Paris. Thereby hangs a tale. Saint-Saëns is a grand extemporiser, and he always extemporised his voluntaries. He was known as a severe, austere musician, and the public had been led to believe that he constantly played fugues. Thus it happened that a young girl about to be married begged him not to play a fugue at *her* wedding! To be sure another asked him to play a funeral march. She wished to weep at her wedding, and as she would not feel tearful, she depended on the organ for the water-works.

There is another good story in this connection. A vicar of the parish observed to Saint-Saëns one day: "The congregation of the Madeleine is composed for the most part of persons who often go to the Opéra-Comique. They have acquired musical tastes that should be respected." To which Saint-Saëns replied: "Monsieur l'Abbé, when I hear in the pulpit the dia-



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SAINT-SAËNS

logue of the Opéra-Comique, I will play appropriate music, but not till then."

Saint-Saëns resigned his post at the Madeleine in 1870, and since then he has occupied no public appointment, finding composition and concert tours enough for his time and attention. He quickly made a name by his symphonic poems, and particularly with that concert-room favourite, the "Danse Macabre." One of his most representative sacred works is "The Deluge," which exhibits his characteristics almost as much as "Samson and Delilah." The story of the latter, which now keenly engages interest, is curious. The subject was taken up by Saint-Saëns before the Franco-Prussian War, and the score was completed in 1872. But there was no performance till 1877, and then it was at Weimar, under the direction of Liszt.

Saint-Saëns has told of the relations with Liszt which brought this about. He says:

"I first saw Liszt in Paris in 1854, and I was then a young fellow of eighteen. I probably heard him at the house of my teacher Seghers, and the impression was so powerful that I at once completely changed my style of playing. About two years later I saw him again in Paris, played to him my first Concerto and my first Mass, and he gave me priceless advice. Then I met him in Germany at a critical moment in my career. I had been working for a long time at my 'Samson et Dalila,' yet without much encouragement from those about me. I began to doubt, felt exhausted, and was

determined finally to bury my plan. Then Liszt entered into the breach. He wouldn't hear of my giving up the opera, encouraged me, and said: 'Finish your opera, and I undertake to get it performed.' And that is how 'Samson et Dalila' was first given on German soil, at Weimar."

Later on "Samson and Delilah" was given in other German cities. Not until 1890, at Rouen, was it recognised in the composer's native country. After that, it quickly ran through the musical centres of Europe. In England it was heard twice in concert form before being staged at Covent Garden in April 1909, having been vetoed by the censor because of the British prejudice against Scriptural subjects being represented on the stage.

As a composer Saint-Saëns writes with astonishing rapidity. He once promised to provide an operetta. A few weeks before the date which had been fixed for the performance it was found that nothing had arrived. Inquiries were made, and it turned out that Saint-Saëns had forgotten all about the commission. He said, however, that he would make amends for his forgetfulness, and in two hours he wrote off twenty-one pages of full score, and the whole thing was finished in an incredibly short time.

CHAPTER FIVE
SOME MODERN CONTINENTALS

CHIEFLY FRENCH AGAIN. FOR IT IS CURIOUS that the modern advance in music seems to concentrate itself largely in France. Artistically independent, French composers give free play to their phantasy, and continue to discover fresh devices, which are not personal to any individual, though differing in the use to which each puts them.

Interchange of ideas is indispensable to the healthy development of art. In Germany disintegration is apparent; her musical supremacy is threatened because of her scorn of other people's music. Insularity is lowering her standard, as was shown at a recent competition in which the judges had to regret that, of 874 compositions submitted, the German works were of lower average quality than the non-German.

It is in France that the greatest degree of independence has been attained. The French are quick-witted. Germans love explanations even of the obvious. The English are affirmative, reiterative. The Frenchman will have neither explanation nor repetition; his restlessness is apt to be a danger. He cannot endure the obvious, but loves the unexpected. He seeks subtlety and perfect finish.

Among the French composers of to-day, M. Vincent D'Indy stands apart, a singularly noble, self-centred, commanding figure. Born in Paris in 1851, he

learnt the technique of his art from César Franck, whose compositions, after long neglect, have had a wonderful revival in recent years. D'Indy has written the best biography of Franck that we have. All through runs the note of enthusiasm and personal affection, and the good old man, organist of St. Clotilde, Paris, and Professor at the Conservatoire—who always appeared in black, and wore his trousers too short—lives again in these pages. Much could be written about Franck if this were the place for such writing. In addition to his gifts as a composer, his talent for teaching must have been very great, for several prominent composers besides D'Indy were his pupils, including Bruneau, Fauré, and Chabrier. He was born at Liége in 1822 and died in Paris in 1890.

D'Indy is also a native of the French capital, born there in 1851. He says he only realised art when he was seventeen, and did not understand Beethoven till over twenty. He has lived a quiet though busy life; and since 1896, when it was founded, has been head of the Schola Cantorum, a practical school of music intended to oppose the official Conservatoire. As a composer he has produced works of every description, from the short song and piano piece to the lyric drama and religious music. He helped Lamoureux to produce "Lohengrin" in 1887, when the anti-Wagnerians tried to stir the public sentiment against the production, and succeeded in fomenting riots around

the theatre. He has himself done much as a conductor in France, America, Russia, Holland, Italy, and Spain. Romance and picture-loving, he is yet of intellectual type, aristocratic in the best sense. He has many fervent admirers and as many detractors, but he leaves no music lover absolutely indifferent.

Then there is Maurice Ravel, a highly-trained French composer, still young, having been born in 1875. His "Jeux d'eau" is well known in England. Some regard Ravel as the most original of the younger contemporary Frenchmen, next to Debussy. He is more definite and formal than Debussy, but there is a certain correspondence between the two, since the outstanding features of Ravel's works are hazy forms, strange colouring, and cryptic idioms. Evidently he enjoys the gruesome, otherwise he would not have portrayed a gibbet on a moor with a corpse swinging in the wind.

But then, too, has he not illustrated in music some of the old French fairy tales which correspond to our Mother Goose, and employed an orchestra of fifty or sixty to do it? At first thought this may seem strange. Why, we might ask, should a composer go to such pains to do such a childish thing? Yet on consideration it has to be admitted that many of the most delightful works of modern art, both dramatic and musical, have been animated by a similar spirit. One does not feel any disproportion in the elaborate stage set-

tings that give to Maeterlinck's childlike play of "The Blue Bird" so much of its charm; nor does one feel the Wagnerian orchestra employed by Humperdinck in "Hänsel and Gretel" to be any too large to give richness of colour to the fascinating old German story. And it is easy to see why a composer finds this vein an enjoyable one to work. By a natural reaction, especially at times when art has become over-refined, the highly sophisticated artist rests and recreates his mind by playing with childish ideas. It amuses him keenly to take a point of view so remote from his own, to set forth the primitive with all the accumulated resources of his skill, to be more subtly childlike than childhood itself, to improve on his model, as a great architect might build with his children's blocks more wonderful castles than they had ever dreamed of. Frequently, indeed, the fruits of this kind of childlike spirit in an artist are of an inimitable flavour, so that we should be reluctant to exchange them for his more pretentious productions. They have a quaintness all their own. Mr. Barrie outdoes his hero at the game of imagination in those chapters of *Sentimental Tommy* that tell of the last Jacobite rising; and Stevenson is never more a magician in words than when he cries:

"The world is so full of a number of things
I am sure we should all be as happy as kings."

It is not surprising, therefore, that the younger French composers, committed as they are to a singul-

arly sophisticated and in some ways artificial type of music, should relax and amuse themselves by an occasional masquerade in the nursery. Debussy, for example, in his suite, "The Children's Corner," brings his wonderfully atmospheric art to the representing of the pipe of "The Little Shepherd," devises a new pianistic tone-colour to set before us a doll's serenade, and idealises rag-time to produce a "Golliwogg's Cake-walk."

And so Maurice Ravel unbends to Mother Goose and Beauty and the Beast! Here at least he has deserved well of all musical children, and of all older music lovers in whom the memory of sweet, quaint, childish things has not faded away.

Leaving France, we may notice M. Sergius Rachmaninoff, one of the most eminent of the younger Russian composers. In the popular mind Russian music is chiefly associated with Tschaïkowsky, that dark, mystic spirit of the Pathetic Symphony. As a matter of fact, from the days of Tschaïkowsky's premature death, the rise of Russian music in the concert rooms of Europe may be dated. And Rachmaninoff stands almost alone.

We are apt to think of Tschaïkowsky, with his gift of being melodiously sorry for himself, as typically Russian. That view is doubtfully correct. Nor do some of the other Russian composers, with their reliance on an Oriental jingle and clatter, satisfy one's ideas of the musical expression of the musical character

of the Russian. But Rachmaninoff is different. About as original as any other Russian composer, he conveys perhaps a greater impression of strength and dignity than any of them. His compositions have long been recognised by the *cognoscenti* as works of solidity and beauty. A Prelude in C sharp minor is a favourite concert piece, and other things are frequently played.

The composer, too, is well known as a virtuoso pianist of high rank and originality. Born forty years ago, he studied theory with his cousin, Arenski, and piano under Siloti, at the Moscow Conservatoire, where he took the gold medal in 1891. He lives a very quiet and retired life in Dresden, and devotes himself principally to composition. Doubtless there is much more permanent and original work to come from him.

Finally (for space considerations are pressing) a word or two about Jean Sibelius, a native of Finland, now about forty-seven years of age. At New York, in the spring of 1913, Mr. Damrosch, the eminent conductor, prefaced his performance of Sibelius' latest symphony with a brief statement in the nature of a warning. He was performing the symphony for the first time in America, he said, as a duty, because it was the last word in symphonic composition of a man who had previously made a recognised place. And if any did not like it, or liked it only in parts, they were to remember this fact.

Photograph by Lafayette, Dublin

GRANVILLE BANTOCK

The symphony, when it was heard, seemed to justify Mr. Damrosch's statement, and the opinion he added that it was the work of a man "tired of the musical effects of the past, or of what have hitherto been considered such"; also that it embodied the most extraordinary ideas of symphonic development that ever he had seen. A distinct novelty in composition, evidently!

Not much is known about Sibelius, for he lives in far-away Helsingfors and shrinks from all forms of publicity. It is told that on one occasion a tour was arranged between him and a celebrated singer; but at the last moment an overwhelming sense of all that it would involve rushed over him—the crowds, the orations, the travelling in public, with, perhaps, speeches to make, the business interviews, the thousand and one insincerities of such undertakings—and he telegraphed that he could not go.

He receives a pension from the Government to enable him to work in peace, and he lives in patriarchal simplicity with his wife and five children, in a house surrounded by a network of lakes, rivers, and forests. He revels in the wild, and the pinewoods bring to him literally "thoughts that do almost lie too deep for tears." His relaxations are boating and fishing, tramping through the storm, wrestling with Nature in her savage moods, basking in her beauty, driving about the moorlands in his trap, or lying on the hills dreaming

and brooding. One of his daughters is reported as "of a strange, wild, elfin type," who has composed tales and songs from early childhood.

Sibelius first visited England at Mr. Granville Bantock's invitation to conduct his symphony in E minor at Liverpool. His fame has been slowly but surely growing here ever since, but he is much better known on the Continent.

VI. SIR EDWARD ELGAR, O.M.

IN THE MAY OF 1902, ELGAR'S "GERONTIUS," performed for the first time at the Birmingham Festival of 1900, was heard at the Lower Rhenish Festival at Düsseldorf. Richard Strauss was there, and at a dinner, after the official toasts had been proposed, he surprised every one by spontaneously proposing another toast. "I raise my glass," he said, "to the welfare and success of the first English Progressivist, Meister Edward Elgar." These generous words gave great offence in some quarters, but they undoubtedly had much to do with the revival of Elgar's great work in his own country.

No British composer ever made such rapid progress in the estimation of musicians as Elgar. In 1890 he was practically unknown outside the circle of his immediate friends; ten years later no festival programme was considered complete which did not include one of his works, and there were few concert programmes in which his name did not appear.

Self-taught, self-centred, self-determined, Elgar may claim, more than any other English composer, that he has been "his own ancestor." He was born at Broadheath, near Worcester, in 1857, the son of a Roman Catholic Church organist, who kept a music shop. The father was apparently not satisfied with his own career as a musician, for he placed his son in a solicitor's office. A year was spent there, and then the boy found his musical bent too strong to be resisted.

Practically, he taught himself, and taught himself to play six or seven instruments, too, though the violin was his chief study. From the age of fifteen he maintained himself. He played in the orchestra of the Festival Choral Society; he sang and played at the Worcester Glee Club; he played bassoon in a wind instrument quintet. Later, he was bandmaster at the Worcester County Asylum, where the Board asked him to write sets of quadrilles at five shillings each. About the same time he was scoring Christy Minstrel songs at eighteenpence each!

He had no formal training: never spent any time in the "shoppy" atmosphere of Conservatoire, College, or Academy. In these respects his history is more like that of the eighteenth-century composer than that of his colleagues and compeers of to-day. It is instructive and encouraging, and without knowing it, it is not possible to understand the influences which have moulded his music, or to know what manner of man he is.

Nobody was ever less like the musician of conventional type. He is an omnivorous reader, thanks to the influence of his mother, who was familiar with all the classics of literature, and is fond of relating how his father once let a disused loft to a second-hand bookseller, who used to deposit his surplus stock there. Elgar, who was then about fifteen, used to spend many hours of his spare time in this loft and read voraciously, and it was books on history and antiquities that

chiefly attracted him. It is to this that he ascribes his great store of out-of-the-way antiquarian knowledge, with which he will astonish and divert his friends. But with his usual modesty he always protests that, like Gibbon when he arrived at Oxford, he has "a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would be ashamed," and leaves his friends to find out that (also like Gibbon) he really has "a stock of erudition which might puzzle a doctor." He can talk a whole morning without even once attributing unworthy motives to a fellow-musician, indeed without even mentioning music. In fact he might be mistaken for a mere ordinary gentleman from his conversation no less than from his appearance. He is not one of those whose minds move in a narrow channel. When he lived among the Malvern Hills, as he did for some years, he deeply interested himself in all that concerned the country-side, and was said to be a keen judge of agricultural implements and top-dressings. Few things delight him more than golf. "Golf is a grand game," he says, "because you can't think of anything else when playing." For some time he was a follower of the American craze for kite-flying. He is a great walker and a cyclist; and sketches of his cycling adventures often adorn his letters to his friends. He once declared that if he had not been a musician he would have been a soldier. He studies also the hidden life of the very poor and destitute. As a young man, he drove round with a baker's

cart in the hope that he might thus see something of the way in which the very poor live; and for weeks together he accompanied a doctor in the slums, eagerly in search for anything typically human.

Elgar continued his work as a player and teacher at Worcester for some years, running up to London occasionally to hear the Crystal Palace orchestra. But he detested the drudgery of teaching, and presently, having married, he removed to London, to cultivate the higher walks. Then his health broke down, and in 1891 he exchanged London for that beautiful home at Craeg Lea (the name conceals an anagram), where he could see without moving from his table the fertile plains which extend towards the Severn—one of the loveliest landscapes of its kind in England.

In November, 1900, the honorary degree of Doctor of Music was conferred on him by the University of Cambridge, when the orator said:

"If ever this votary of the muse of song looked from the hills of his present home at Malvern, from the cradle of English poetry, the scene of the vision of Piers Plowman, and from the British Camp, with its legendary memories of his own 'Caractacus,' and in the light of the rising sun the towers of Tewkesbury, and Gloucester, and Worcester, he might recall in that view the earlier stages of his career, and confess with modest pride, like the bard in the *Odyssey:*

'Self-taught I sing; 'tis Heaven and Heaven alone,
Inspires my song with music all its own.'"

Now Sir Edward is once more established in London—at Hampstead. There, among many other interesting things, you can see his baton. It is a very ordinary stick, but it contains, he says, his biography. On it he has written the dates on which he has conducted the first performances of his works. Another thing of which he is justly proud is a fine tankard, made by some members of the Festival Choir at Hanley, which was the first to sing his "King Olaf."

Sir Edward once told that most of his composing is done out-of-doors communing with Nature. A thunder-storm, a gale, a gentle breeze, a quiet landscape, or a rugged scene, all have a musical effect on his mind, and will form themselves into a composition. But it requires work to put this down. An American paper once gave a series of New Year resolutions by prominent musicians. Elgar's resolve was: "That after all, it would perhaps be better if a composer only composed." In this case the resolve has never materialised, for Elgar not only composes, but he was for some years Professor of Music in Birmingham University, and he conducts. He received £1000 for going to Cincinnati to conduct "The Apostles."

Miss Florence Fidler, who has played in an amateur orchestra under his baton, says that he is hopeless as a teacher, but is a fine conductor. Those who need to be taught orchestral playing must go elsewhere. If the band is experienced, and knows how to allow

itself to be played on, he will play on it to some purpose. But he is at the mercy of his moods, and rarely does a thing twice alike. At preliminary practices with an incomplete band he plays missing wind parts with his left hand, and beats time with his right. He can bear much provocation with patience, and little provocation with no patience at all. If a violin player drops his mute there is a rumpus; on the other hand, he is unsparing in his care for detail, and will repeat a passage many times until he is satisfied.

The composer of "Gerontius" and that popular melody "Salut d'Amour" is a man of a most generous and kindly nature. He took up Miss Marie Hall when she was nine, and gave her violin lessons at his home. When the blind organist, William Wolstenholme, composed his degree exercise, it was Elgar who committed the work to paper from the composer's dictation, devoting many afternoons to this laborious, self-imposed task. Then he went to Oxford with his friend, to act as amanuensis in the examination room. He received his knighthood in 1904, and in 1911 was appointed to the Order of Merit—the greatest honour so far bestowed on an English musician.

What Wagner did for opera from the point at which it was left by Mozart and Weber, says one of his biographers, Elgar is doing for oratorio from the point at

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, Bt.

which it was left by Handel and Mendelssohn, and, as many believe, with equal inspiration. This is but a part of his work, but were it his solitary achievement, he would have richly earned a conspicuous place among the immortals.

VII. GRANVILLE BANTOCK

MR GRANVILLE BANTOCK IS THE SON OF an eminent surgeon, and was born in London in 1868. He studied first for the Indian Civil Service, but his health broke down, and he had to give up the idea of an official career. Then he took to chemical engineering. Music was never thought of till he was twenty. It was at the South Kensington Museum Library that the attractions of MS. scores of certain composers caused him to forsake all for the art.

In 1888 he entered the Royal Academy of Music as a student, and took a wide course—composition, clarinet, violin, viola, and organ. He even played the drum in the students' orchestra! At the Academy he became known as a composer of so-called "tone-poems," and one of his excursions into that region was a piece called "Satan in Hell." On the occasion of its being tried at a students' concert, the players naturally warmed up to their work, and produced such an orgie of sound as to cause the Principal, who was conducting, to ask the composer: "What does *this* mean?" "That's hell," said Bantock.

His master for composition was Frederick Corder, and Corder has recorded his experiences with him. He says:

"Granville Bantock was almost the first of a long line of clever students who have passed through my hands during the last twenty years. He gained the Macfarren Scholarship entirely on the promise of his

talent, for at that time he knew nothing at all. It was characteristic of him that he should exhibit as specimens of his powers some wild attempts to set to music large portions of *Paradise Lost*—indeed, I fear he meditated setting the entire work. My heart went out to the daring enthusiast, and remained with him ever after.

"His industry and perseverance were abnormal. I do not think I have ever had a pupil who worked so hard. He was none of your born geniuses that the halfpenny papers love to tell us about, who write symphonies at seven and are exploded gas-bags at fourteen. He dug and tilled his field like an honest labourer, and it was many years before the crop was good. But now he can look with pride upon the just results of good studentship. Let him tell, if he cares to, of his severe and manful struggles against disappointment and hard luck when he first entered the big world: it is only for me to say that no man ever was more deserving of success than Granville Bantock. He never turned his back on a friend, therefore he will never lack helpers and well-wishers. He never deserted his high ideals, therefore his muse will be ever kinder and kinder to him."

Bantock has been "through the hards," as the saying is. In 1893 he became conductor of a travelling company who performed burlesques in the provinces. His salary was £3 a week, while his orchestra consisted of one violin, one double-bass, one cornet, and "the left hand of the conductor on an anæmic piano." One of the burlesques was "Bonnie Boy Blue," the overture to which consisted of variations on "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay."

An important change in his life came in 1897 when he was appointed musical director of the New Brighton Tower orchestra. That same year he founded the New Brighton Choral Society, and became conductor of the Runcorn Philharmonic Society, thus widening his interests and extending his rapidly-growing influence as a master musician. In March 1898 he married Miss Helena von Schweitzer, who had previously been associated with him in writing the lyrics for the "Songs of the East" and other librettos. It was during his New Brighton period that he composed his orchestral variations "Helena," on the theme H. F. B., his wife's initials—a characteristic work which bears an equally characteristic dedication:

"DEAREST WIFE!—Accept these little Variations with all my heart's love. They are intended as an expression of my thoughts and reflections on some of your moods during a wearisome absence from each other."

After spending three active and useful years at New Brighton, Mr. Bantock found his anchorage and a fine outlet for his energies and administrative skill on being appointed Principal of the School of Music connected with the Birmingham and Midland Institute. Then, in 1908, he succeeded Sir Edward Elgar as Professor of Music in the University of Birmingham, where he has

done, and is doing, notable work. Speaking recently of the University music course, he said:

"The candidate must produce good modern work, human work, music that expresses some phase of human feeling. A candidate who included a fugue in his composition would incur some risk of being ploughed. We shall not value canons that go backwards, or that play equally well with the music upside down. We want to produce musicians who will emulate Sibelius and Strauss and Debussy, whom I regard as being the best orchestral writers now living."

Mr. Bantock dislikes being called "Professor." Three or four years ago he was reported to have lost his professional gown, and it is suggested that the one he uses on degree days, &c., is probably a spare one loaned by some colleague.

But Mr. Bantock is really first and last a composer. His works are very numerous, and several of the most important have been produced at the leading festivals. The Viennese performance of "Omar Khayyam" was one of the most significant details in the history of English music. It is obvious, as one biographer has remarked, that he is a heavy worker. Few, however, seem to meet him when he is busy or rushed. He says he composes to please himself. "The impulse to create music is upon me, and I write to gratify my impulse. When I have written the work, I have done with it. I do not want to hear it. What I do desire is to begin to enjoy myself by writing something else."

The explanation of his great output probably lies in the unusual circumstances that as a smoker he never has to hunt for his matches, and that as a daily railway traveller he never has to run for his train or (given a punctual service) to wait for it at the station. Mr. Bantock, it may be added, finds his chief recreation in chess.

PIANISTS

CHAPTER EIGHT PADEREWSKI

"LISZT IS DEAD, AND BÜLOW IS DEAD, AND Rubinstein is dead, and all three are reincarnated in the most brilliant pianist of the day." So wrote a critic of Paderewski in 1895. There are indeed some respects in which Paderewski may be said to excel any of his predecessors among the virtuosi of the pianoforte. In the old days, the days of the young Liszt and Rubinstein, technique was the master and not the servant of the art. Mere finger dexterity was held in high esteem, and pianists dazzled less by their interpretations of classical works—which they seldom played in public—than by the number of notes they could strike in a given time.

Even Liszt did not fear at the beginning of his career to make his new and powerful technique the master of his art—as when he changed the sustained bass notes in a Beethoven sonata into trills and tremolos to show the suppleness of his fingers. And what Liszt did, others did. It was nothing that the composer had given expression in his music to certain well-defined intentions: technique had been cultivated for its own sake, and the light-fingered wizards hesitated not to enter into open warfare with the musician, whom they were falsely supposed to "interpret."

We have left this characteristic of the virtuoso far behind in these days. It is no longer technique alone, but technique in union with musical feeling that is wanted. In Goethe's words, "one must be able to

command poetry": one must have mind and soul, as well as a supple wrist and pliable fingers, if he would reach the hearts of listeners through the keyboard. And Paderewski meets the demand.

Though there are other virtuosi who can interpret, say, Chopin and Schumann, to gladden the heart of the enthusiast, there is only one Paderewski. Piano and Paderewski are indeed, somehow, synonymous as well as alliterative in the mind of the average person; and it is not too much to say that the name will long be as a household word wherever the universal language of music is spoken.

Probably the majority of his listeners would find it difficult to analyse accurately the cause of their excessive enjoyment and appreciation. It is not his technique, though he is a supreme master of his instrument. Nor is it any marked or obvious trick of manner or style such as distinguish the playing of Chopin by Pachmann, of Beethoven by D'Albert, of Mozart by Pugno, or of Liszt by Busoni. The individuality of Paderewski is too broad to be limited in special directions, and the glamour of his style, which fascinates and holds an audience, is something to be felt and enjoyed rather than argued about.

In addition to striking individuality and ripe musicianship, he is strongly emotional, and possesses that curiously indefinable thing we call magnetism, which never fails to enchain the attention of the public. He

has always been the poet playing to the muses: he has never played down to the level of the street.

Of course his personal appearance must be allowed to count for much of his popularity. That flying aureole of silky hair is—or at least was in the early days—more to him in ducats and drawing power than a third hand would be. Once after a recital in Berlin, he left the hall and hailed a cab. The driver called out rather noisily: "Where to?" Before Paderewski had time to reply, one of the crowd of bystanders shouted: "To the barber." Mrs. Paderewski told a Yankee interviewer one day that her husband couldn't act like other men, because "everywhere he goes he is stared at so." The pressman asked: "Why doesn't he get his hair cut?" "Oh, it would make no difference. They would know him, and he would be stared at just as much. Besides," she added, "the public would be disappointed if his hair were short."

Of course, they would! As another Yankee wrote: "To the dear women every strand of Paderewski's golden hair was a cable that pulled tons. His low-cut shirt and turn-down collar were full of subtle poetic significance. His flowing white necktie was a potent charm. Even the patent leather pumps, which he wore with a frock coat, and with which he vigorously smote the pedals, were an attraction."

Israel Zangwill says there are three reasons why men of genius wear their hair long. "One is, they for-

get it is growing. The second is that they like it. The third is that it comes cheaper: they wear it long for the same reason that they wear their hats long." Paderewski wears his hair long because it is a valuable asset. Regarded from a distance, his head has the appearance of that of an ultra-fashionable society woman in all the glory of the latest coiffure. His eyes are set so far back that it is difficult to say what they are like, and having no music to read, he often keeps them closed. His face is like the Sphynx: white, placid, clear-cut, and absolutely immobile. During the rendering of his soul-moving passages, he sits almost impassive. He does not rock upon his seat, nor throw his halo-surrounded head to the rhythm of the music. Neither do his hands fly from the keyboard after the manner of the third-rate performer. But undoubtedly the most wonderful thing is his bowing. No young girl after a course at a school of deportment bows half so gracefully as does Mr. Paderewski.

The main details of Paderewski's life prior to his appearance in public are soon told. He was born in a little village in Russian Poland in 1860. He attributes his talent to his mother, who was musical, and started him playing when he was only three. His father, for some political offence, had suffered six years' imprisonment in Siberia. When the boy was six, he took his first formal piano lessons. He remained with one master for four years, and was then beyond the need

of local instruction. When he was twelve, he went to the Warsaw Conservatoire, and after six years, when the Conservatoire had done all it could for him, he was elected a professor at the institution.

Here he did some very plain living and some very high thinking. Then, at twenty, he joined the staff of the Strassburg Conservatoire. There, again, to use his own words, he was "very poor, worked very hard, and underwent many hardships." As a fact, he was vulgarly impecunious; and, to make matters worse, he had an ailing wife on his hands, having married early. She took ill after the birth of her first child, and it is said that her husband's inability to provide her with the necessary nourishment and nursing had much to do with her premature death. Later, Paderewski was earning over £20,000 a year!

When she was nearing her end Mme. Paderewski confided the care of her infant to her friend Mme. Hélène de Rosen. Some years afterwards, Mme. de Rosen was divorced from her husband: Paderewski married her, and so she became a mother to the little invalid boy who had long learned to love her. The boy suffered from a spinal trouble, which all Paderewski's later fortune could not alleviate, and he died in his sleep, in 1901, while the father was on tour in Spain. Paderewski used to tell an amusing story of him. They were together in Paris, and Paderewski was to give a recital at the Cirque. The boy asked if he might go,

and the pianist consented. When the boy came home his father asked him how he had enjoyed himself. "Oh, not at all," was the youngster's reply. "It was the dullest circus I have ever been to. I expected to see you go through hoops, but you only played at the piano, just as you do at home!"

But to return. All these early days of his poverty Paderewski was labouring very strenuously towards the development of his technique; and being disgusted with the drudgery of teaching, he soon began to think of becoming a virtuoso. To this end he must find a master who would carry forward his development on the right lines. Such a master he discovered when, in 1886, he went to Vienna, and put himself under Theodor Leschetitzky. Of Leschetitzky he speaks in terms of the deepest affection. He had only about thirty lessons from him, but, with characteristic modesty, he gives his teacher all the credit of his subsequent success.

Paderewski made his *début* in 1887 before the critical public of Vienna. At once he was acclaimed one of the most remarkable pianists of the day; and from that time onwards his career has been a succession of triumphs. The power of his personality was such in his earlier years, that he often worked his admirers into a frenzy; and scenes were witnessed at his recitals which only Liszt had experienced. For example, at St. James' Hall, London, ladies rushed from their seats to the plat-

form in a struggle to get as near the pianist as possible. They plucked the flowers from their dresses, and held them out to him, over the heads of those who were near.

It was not Paderewski's fault that his mere personality and appearance carried people away in this fashion. He sought to please by his art alone, and he took tremendous pains to perfect himself as a performer. Liszt's three requisites for a great pianist were: "Technique, technique, and technique." A great pianist, as I have already remarked, assuredly wants something more than technique. But he undoubtedly wants that first and above all, and Paderewski has technique in marvellous abundance. His hands are so delicate that an ordinarily firm shake makes him wince; but his forearm shows a muscular development of which an athlete might be proud; and there is simply nothing in the way of digital dexterity that is beyond him. The foundation of this marvellous execution was certainly laid by Leschetitzky; but the foundation has been so much built over by Paderewski himself that the structure is practically his own. And look what a labour he has had in the building! The amount of daily practice necessary for a great pianist in order to "keep up" his technique would seem to vary greatly. Liszt at the zenith of his power used to practise ten hours a day; while, on the other hand, Rubinstein practised very little after he had made his name. Sauer is said to practise only four hours a day.

Paderewski, however, beats all records in that way. In recent years, when he has taken more to composition, he has practised less, but his daily devotion to the keyboard used to be quite phenomenal. Somebody once asked him *when* he practised. "Why, always," he replied. "One must always be at it to keep the fingers right and the memory active." Sometimes he would play for fifteen or sixteen hours a day; playing between the courses at meals, while dressing—in fact, whenever a minute could be spared.

Once, in New York, he had to work up eight entirely distinct programmes in as many days, and then he found it a case of seventeen hours daily. Of course, this meant that he must practise half through the night. And, indeed, Paderewski's fondness for nocturnal wrestlings with the piano has more than once proved a custom less appreciated by his fellow hotel guests than it would be by his public audience. At New York, however, he varied the place of "disturbance" by one night selecting the showroom of Messrs. Steinway, the piano makers. On the evening before his first recital, he left his hotel for a stroll about 9.30, and after walking about Union Square, started rapidly off to Steinway Hall, where he hammered away till the watchman let him in. He then went into the principal wareroom, opened the biggest piano he could find, had the gas lighted, and from ten o'clock in the evening he sat there until four the next morning, with the watchman as his

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PADEREWSKI

"audience." Then he went home, slept for ten hours, and was ready for his recital.

Before every concert he gives, something of this kind goes on in the way of practising. The night preceding a recital he goes over his programme repeatedly and exhaustively, so that when he has planned out his execution and technique, he is ready for his audience. Even when travelling on the railway he practises. He takes about an Erard piano with him in a special saloon car.

Such an amount of practice must be terribly tiring. Some might even think that it would defeat its own end by exhausting the player completely and taking all the heart out of him. Paderewski himself admits that it is tiring, but he has what he calls "a harmless secret" to account for his ability to carry it on. He plays billiards, and playing billiards, he says, has literally saved his life. If he walks or rides, or merely rests, he goes on thinking all the time, and his nerves get no rest. But when he plays billiards he can forget everything, and the result is mental rest and physical rest combined. In this way, then, does Paderewski lighten his labours at the piano. Moreover, he keeps himself as far as possible in physical "form" by practising calisthenics every morning after rising; and then he always gives his nerves a rest by remaining perfectly quiet during the hours preceding a recital. Naturally, like most people of a highly sensitive temperament, he suffers a good deal from insomnia; and

although none of his listeners would ever imagine it, we have it, on his own authority, that he is a martyr to nervousness when before the public. "I assure you," he once said to an interviewer, "I go through positive tortures when I have to play in public." Once in America a reporter ventured the remark that the only person who didn't enjoy the recital was Paderewski himself. And Paderewski admitted that the reporter was right. Paderewski's nerves are, in fact, so highly strung that the vibration of the ship during his voyage to Australia made him suffer acutely. He had four pianos on board, but was only able to practise one or two days during the voyage. If he had known what the voyage meant, he would never have undertaken it, he said.

With delightful irony, he once revealed to an American paper the "whole secret" of how a pianist can keep his hands supple. "The night before I play, I turn my hands over to my valet, and he rubs my fingers until they tingle. Then he takes one finger after the other and turns and twists it in the palm of his hand, always turning the one way. That makes the fingers supple, and keeps the knuckles in good working order. Last he rubs the palm of each hand very hard—as hard as I can stand it. Just before I go on the platform to play I have a basin of hot water brought to my dressing-room. In this I immerse my hands. Hot! I should say so: just about as hot as it is possible for me to stand it."

As a man, Paderewski is wholly lovable. He is generous to a fault. He cannot pass a blind man without giving him alms; and the story has been told how, when at Yport, he used to play on the sands with the children, and delighted in giving them money as well as presents. An amusing incident happened in connection with his generosity here. He had taken a fancy to one little fellow because he was more poorly clad than the others; and pained at seeing the pink feet blistered and chafed by the pebbles and shells on the beach, he took him to a boot shop and bought him a serviceable pair of boots. Next morning, on looking out of his window, he was amazed to see that the entire population of shoeless village children had assembled outside the house in order to draw his attention to their little bare feet!

Paderewski is well known among his friends as a wit who has generally a ready answer even in English, a language which he has mastered with wonderful ease. One night he was to be the chief performer at a smart private concert, but, unfortunately, he was detained in arriving, and did not turn up until he was just in time to hear the hostess say to a guest, a well-known polo player and an excellent amateur musician: "Oh! Captain, do be a dear kind soul and play us a solo until Paderewski arrives." Paderewski did not make himself known to his hostess until after the captain had finished his solo, and then turning to the

amateur, he gracefully congratulated him upon his performance. "Ah," said the young man modestly, "it is very kind of you to congratulate me, but nobody is more painfully aware of the fact of how great a difference there is between us." "Oh!" replied Paderewski, "the difference isn't so very great after all—you are a dear soul who plays polo, while I am a poor Pole who plays solo!"

The great pianist is an intensely patriotic Pole. Once he began a large subscription to a Polish committee at Posen, whose object was to prevent Prussian Poland from being Germanised, and as a consequence, the Prussian Government forbade the performance of his opera "Manru." When in Australia, the demand for his autograph was overwhelming, so he decided to charge half-a-crown per autograph, and the money went to the Chopin Memorial Hall at Warsaw. In 1910 he unveiled a colossal statue of King Jagello which he had erected at Cracow at a cost of £20,000.

Paderewski is not melancholy, as many have imagined. Indeed, his disposition is cheerful in the extreme. Like Rubinstein, he is fond of cigarettes; and although some silly people used to indulge the notion that he lived on lemons and soda, those who are intimate with him know differently. He is sturdy, many-sided, and cosmopolitan, and well-posted on public questions. He never signs an agreement, and he

has never failed to keep an engagement except through serious illness. Among those who have been connected with him in a business capacity his word is as good as his bond—better than his bond, in fact. Like most travelled and travelling foreigners, he is a capital linguist. He speaks Polish, of course, being a Pole; but he also speaks Russian, French, German, English, and—as some cynic has put it—"a little American." Somebody says he knows Shakespeare from cover to cover. Like all Poles, he is superstitious. He has an extraordinary memory, and the repertoire from which he can draw without book at a moment's notice is practically without limit.

Paderewski now lives in a richly wooded park on the shores of Lake Geneva, cheered by the companionship of his wife. He used to have a farm in Poland, but gave it up because he was losing money on it. He has taken another at Morges, near Lausanne, and makes a speciality of live stock—a strange hobby for a popular pianist. He may be seen talking with farmers by the hour about cattle, but if they mention music, he shuts up like a trap. When in Ireland a few years ago he bought some pigs from a farmer and had them sent over to his estate. Next week the farmer took a dozen of the remaining pigs to market. "Ach, yer pigs are as thin as greyhounds, Paddy," remarked a prospective buyer. "Begorra, sorr, an' that shows all yez knows about them. Why, it was only last week

I sold tin av the same lot to Mr. Paderewski, the great Polish pig-dealer!"

Paderewski has done some notable things in composition, but it is as the virtuoso pianist that he will be remembered.

CHAPTER NINE PACHMANN

SOMEBODY ONCE SAID OF PACHMANN: "He is not so much a pianist as a personality." And, indeed, it must be admitted that, though his abilities as a pianist astonish one, the man himself is unique. He has impressed his personality upon the public in a way and to an extent which no other pianist has been able to do. His impromptu lectures, his confidential asides, and his friendly smiles may annoy some, but they please a great number of people; whether they be the conscious tricks of a shrewd actor or the naïve outbursts of a genius, there is art of itself in the way in which Pachmann can hold the attention of a crowded concert-room. No other pianist in the world dare so much as attempt a quarter of the things Pachmann does with complete success.

It has often been remarked that he seldom does himself justice in the opening number of his programme. At one recital he found fault with his chair, was visibly annoyed by his shirt collar, and confided to the nearest members of the audience that it was impossible to play in such a heated atmosphere. During his American tour of 1891–92, he was accompanied by his wife, who, as Miss Okey, had been one of his pupils. She gave some recitals in New York, and Pachmann made himself amusing by sitting among the audience and applauding vigorously. He went through marvellous contortions expressive of delight, and was continually shouting "Charmante!" "Magnifique!" &c.

After all, why should the musician not seek to enter into personal relations with his audience, if to do so happens to suit his fancy? Pachmann is all through the friend of his audience. Suppose he plays a scale. It is like a string of pearls. "*Bon!*" he says, delightedly. And he is quite right: it *is* beautiful. Or the charm of some passage strikes him anew. "The melody!" he exclaims enthusiastically, and he marks out the melody for a bar or two, so that the audience may be under no mistake. It is a recital and a lecture in one. Preposterous! some people say. But the listener who cannot profit by the remarks of Pachmann, knows more than Pachmann, and that kind of listener is not usually present at his recitals!

It is best to accept the strange pianist as he is, with all his foibles. He is undoubtedly a genius. And all this elaborate presentment of his personality is no mere pose, as many think: it is a thing natural to himself; a manner over which he has no control. Moreover, his behaviour, however unusual it may look, never upsets his superlative playing.

Those who have not seen Pachmann play can have no idea of what there is to "see," as well as to hear. He will place his hand on his heart, and shake his head sorrowfully. He winks, gesticulates, sighs, talks. In the middle of an exquisite passage, he will turn to those seated around him on the platform, and seek to heighten the effect of the music by a series of ecstatic exclam-

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PACHMANN

ations, perfectly sincere if somewhat disconcerting. He is always on intimate terms with those sitting in the first few rows. If any one should seem to be resenting his magnetic stare, he heeds not: those dark, heavy eyes will still linger upon that face, and he will still give the impression that he is playing for that individual alone.

I have seen him leave the platform after a dozen recalls, drawing from his pocket an immaculate handkerchief, unfold it, and wave it in a last farewell. If any one else did this, it would be ridiculous. Done by Pachmann, it was most graceful. He does not pose at the piano, as some do, gazing abstractedly forward in complete absorption. He turns his face to the public, fixing them with his glowing black eyes, and holding them in complete control. If he hears so much as a whisper while he is playing, he promptly calls the offender to order. If he is getting more applause than he thinks is agreeable, his gesticulations with hands and arms indicate that there has been enough disturbance. If a repetition of some piece is insisted on, he does not yield unconditionally, but first consults his watch to see if there is time.

Whether genius is conscious of its own powers has often been debated. Pachmann, at least, has no doubt about his standing. "Je suis le roi des pianists," he says. Being once asked to name the first five living pianists in order of merit, he began: "Second, God-

owsky; third, Rosenthal; fourth, Paderewski; fifth, Busoni!" English audiences, he says, "are often cold, but never when I play. When I go on the platform it sometimes takes four or five minutes before I can begin, and when I am finished they shout and scream." He is not fond of the critics, and to an American interviewer he told the truth about them in his own characteristic way. "Critics," said the great little man, in a burst of indignation, "critics are a canaille—a set of villainous rascals. I never read what they write. What harm can they do to my genius, my grand genius? What care I, so long as my mere name suffices to attract the people? The people admire and adore me. To them I am a god. Kings, queens, and high nobility have kissed my hands. What, then, have I to fear from critics?"

He is something of a humorist, too, this little man who is big at the keyboard. Once he saw an advertisement of piano lessons given by a lady at tenpence an hour. He answered the advertisement in person, and on being asked to give a specimen of his abilities, sat down and bungled through a Chopin waltz. "That's shocking," said the lady. "You've been very badly taught." "Yes," replied Pachmann, "but I began so late." Then he paid his fee, and left his card in the hand of the petrified instructress.

As a pianist Pachmann has a fashion all his own. He does wonderful things with his fingers, and his

tone quality is beautiful—soft, sweet, and caressing. There is no doubt a want of breadth, of nobility, of manliness, of intellectuality about his playing; and considerations of the intentions of the composer probably never occur to him. But he is a superb artist both in conception and development. His playing is thoughtful and charged with sentiment, and as an interpreter of Chopin he is absolutely unrivalled.

Vladimir de Pachmann was born at Odessa in 1848, where his father was a professor in the University, and a good amateur violinist. When eighteen he was sent to Vienna Conservatoire, and subsequently carried off the gold medal there. Returning to Russia in 1869, he gave a series of successful recitals, but he was not satisfied with himself, and retired for eight years' hard study. At the end of that time he made appearances in Leipzig, Berlin, and other places; but, still dissatisfied, retired again for two years.

Emerging from his seclusion, he gave three concerts in Vienna and three in Paris, and now feeling himself perfect in his art, he started on that career of concert-giving which has made him everywhere famous. There is very little gossip about his private life; but the interesting fact may be stated that, after divorce, Mme. Pachmann, already mentioned, became the wife of Maître Labori, the famous French lawyer who defended Captain Dreyfus in 1899.

Pachmann is very short in stature—so much so that after hearing him play, one might well be tempted to lay down the axiom: "The smaller the man, the greater the artist." He has recently decided to make his home in Berlin.

CHAPTER TEN EMIL SAUER

THERE IS NO GREATER PIANIST AT THE present time than Emil Sauer. His individuality is almost as well defined and as fascinating as that of Paderewski or Pachmann, and his technique is as marvellously perfect as theirs or Busoni's. Pugno says he is the greatest of the four great, the others being Busoni, D'Albert, and Siloti. His characteristics are so heroic that it is even permissible to evoke the shades of Liszt and Rubinstein if we desire to multiply our comparisons.

This man with the sympathetic face has everything necessary for the pianist. Dignity, breadth, and depth are evident. He has temperament enough for three players, but wonderfully controlled. He plays at times, as an American writer says, like one possessed, but his supreme taste enables him to avoid excess and mere sensationalism. Exciting in a high degree is his building up of climaxes, but he never indulges in noise, nor, in his wildest flights, do we miss a noble self-restraint and pose.

Emil Sauer is a native of Hamburg, where he was born in 1862. He had for mother a Scotswoman, Miss Gordon, and he speaks English perfectly. At first he was intended for the law, but Anton Rubinstein heard him play when quite young, and recommended his being sent to the Moscow Conservatoire. Here he remained for two years, and then entered on an extensive series of concert tours. Later on, he made the acquaint-

ance of Liszt, who became his fricnd and counsellor, and with whom he studied at Weimar for a year. To have been on intimate terms with these two phenomenal pianists, Rubinstein and Liszt, would have been a fortunate thing for any young musician, but especially for one so gifted as Sauer. The interregnum with Liszt was one of the very few pauses in a virtuosic career which has been distinguished by exceptional activity, and has taken him over a very large portion of the globe.

He paid his premier visit to London in 1894, and he appeared first in America, at New York, in 1899, when he was described as "a slim man of evidently nervous temperament." In the course of his extensive tours he has received a great number of tokens of royal and official appreciation. In all he is a member of over eighteen Orders, the latest being the French Legion of Honour. Since the existence of that Order, it is the first instance of its bestowal on a German pianist, though Sauer shares it with Liszt, Rubinstein, and Paderewski. In this connection a critic writes: "It seems a pity that the public should only have a bald list of these distinctions; and it might be advisable for such artists as possess a goodly store of much-valued emblems of royal admiration to appear fully decorated with them at their concerts, even though the burden of them might interfere with the technical display." The idea of a recital pianist being decorated like a war veteran is distinctly novel.

Sauer is very impatient of interruptions while he is playing. Once at an Edinburgh recital an interesting little incident happened. There be those who, like Charles Lamb, seem to perceive a mystic connection between an unpunctual arrival and a premature departure. Some like-minded persons went a step further at Edinburgh, and proceeded to leave the hall in the middle of one of Sauer's solos. He stopped immediately, watched them go, and then began again. It was an affront, doubtless quite unintentional, which would have provoked a curate to strong language. There was a round of sympathetic applause as Sauer resumed his solo, but he did not smile.

Once at a Saturday "Pop" in London he was compelled to interrupt his performance by the impertinent tinkling of a muffin bell in the street. He was just beginning Chopin's Fantasia in F minor, when the knell of the perambulating baker fell on his ear. What could he do but pause until the rival instrumentalist had passed out of range? A commenting critic said it was "humiliating for a celebrated pianist to be brought to a standstill by a muffin bell." But, really, amusing incidents of that kind tend to agreeably vary the monotony of existence.

As a composer, Sauer, like Chopin, has devoted himself almost exclusively to the pianoforte, though he has written also a few songs. At his recitals he usually plays some of his own works. The path of the pianist

who composes is apt to be somewhat like the path of the transgressor—hard. Everybody wants to hear him play somebody else's music. Too frequently nobody wants to hear anybody play his. A disparaging pressman once unkindly said of Paderewski that he loses the money he makes as a pianist producing large works for a cold and unsympathetic public. Emil Sauer is not of this kind. His works are, as a rule, good enough for himself or anybody else to play, and his audiences hear them gladly.

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SAUER

XI. MORITZ ROSENTHAL

WHEN MORITZ ROSENTHAL FIRST VISITED London in 1895, Richter introduced the newcomer to his orchestra with these words: "Gentlemen, this is the king of pianists." Something of the same kind had been said before.

"I never knew what technique was until I heard Rosenthal," exclaimed Rubinstein. Hanslick, the famous German critic, called him a "pianoforte conjurer," while another well-known critic described him as "a Cagliostro among the young pianists." When he first toured America in 1888, some enthusiast said he was a thunderbolt!

Rosenthal was born in 1862, at Lemberg, an Austrian city in the province of Galicia. His father was a professor at the principal educational institution in the place; and it was no doubt from him that Moritz derived the germs of that general culture, and also, it may be assumed, that partiality for intellectual pursuits, which distinguish him among his artistic brethren. For Rosenthal is devoted to literature. His favourite poet is Heine, and he can repeat any of Heine's poems if you give him the first line. He has written freely on musical subjects, and has measured pens with some of his critics in such a manner as to show that he has a ready and pungent wit.

Thus, in the Vienna *Die Zeit*, he once (in 1895) tackled a critic who objected to his untraditional readings of certain classics—tackled him in this style:

"German criticism has demanded a slavish imitation of authority, the inevitableness and freezing of the shading in tone and *tempo*, the banishment of all rights to musical definition, in a word, the ideal hand-organ. Genius cannot bear tradition. Tradition is a crutch for the lame, but one cannot fly with it. Tradition does not even acquaint us with the *tempi*, as the composer feels differently in the various situations of life, and at different episodes. You artists of the holy order of tradition, who walk about heavily, measured, with a swollen breast of unexpressive, mannered mannerisms, your stiff elegance, your poverty of phrases which you lovingly spread over art—I leave to you your affected affectation, your blunt understanding, your unbounded narrowness. We no longer want 'true servants of art; what we need are masters."

Strong and sweeping, but not untrue. Some of the redundancies are very expressive, such as "mannered mannerisms," "affected affectation," and the amusing Irishism, "unbounded narrowness."

Musically, Rosenthal was something of a prodigy. He was only ten when he became a pupil of Carl Mikuli, the director of the Lemberg Conservatoire, and a month or two of study enabled him to appear with his master in a public performance of Chopin's Rondo in C for two pianos. Thus far there had been no special intention that the boy should adopt a musical career. But Fate often hangs on trifling incidents. In 1872 Rosenthal set out on foot for Vienna to see Rafael Joseffy,

and consult with him about his future. Joseffy heard him play, and agreed to take him as a pupil.

Presently the Rosenthal family moved to Vienna, and Moritz pursued his studies under congenial conditions. He made his *début* in 1876, playing Beethoven's Thirty-two Variations, Chopin's F minor Concerto, and some pieces by Liszt and Mendelssohn. Liszt was present, and warmly praised the player. "There is within you a great pianist who will surely work his way out," he said. Rosenthal was accepted into the much-envied ranks of Liszt's pupils, as perhaps the youngest of his disciples. "His highly encouraging prognostication sounded to me then like a magic word, which seemed to open wide for me the door of art and of the future; and I followed him, the great magician, to Weimar, Rome, and Tivoli." Was there ever such a dazzling luminary of the keyboard as Franz Liszt? Rosenthal's reminiscences of him are among the best things he has written.

A concert tour through Roumania followed the Vienna appearance of 1876, and at Bucharest this lad of fourteen was appointed Court pianist. Though he had begun serious study with Liszt, he was evidently still somewhat undecided about his future, for while he worked hard at music, he was a student at the University of Vienna, where he went through the usual course in philosophy, and took the M.A. degree. About the time that he went to Liszt, he made a number of

appearances in St. Petersburg, Paris, and elsewhere; but after that he abandoned public musical life entirely, and did not come before the world again for six years. Re-entered on his virtuosic career, a long series of concert tours in Europe and America followed each other in rapid succession, and have continued to the present time.

Rosenthal possesses a stupendous technique equal to anything. His peculiar temperament, sometimes hard, but never lean in its expression of musical truths, readily lends itself to the grandiloquent, the magnificent, the sonorous, the nobility in decoration, and all that is lofty and sublimated in pure thought. But "he misses, or rather neglects, the softer, serener side of art. There is no twilight in his playing, yet he controls every nuance of the piano palette. Pachmann and Rosenthal can both draw from the instrument remarkably varied tonal qualities. Rosenthal's tone is the thunderbolt, Pachmann's like a rose-leaf; yet Rosenthal, because of sheer power, can whisper quite as poetically as the Russian."

Such is the verdict of an American critic. As a fact, of no other artist can it be said with any semblance of truth that he combines all the virtues and avoids all the vices of pianoforte-playing. In spite of the formidable list of great pianists who have gained the public ear, the name of Rosenthal remains one to conjure with.

CHAP. XII. MARK HAMBOURG

MR. MARK HAMBOURG, WHO TRAVELS TO and fro upon the earth, delighting great audiences, has now lived for thirty-four years, but many will still remember and think of him as an infant prodigy. He did not like being exploited and feted as a prodigy. Ladies insisted on kissing him and stroking his hair, and he found it "so tiresome." They brought him flowers, though he told them that bouquets were no use to him; and at last he made it a rule that the ladies couldn't kiss him if they only brought flowers: they must bring sweets, for he was very fond of sweets.

In those days, when he was about nine or ten, he "did not love practising a bit." In fact the naughty little boy would sometimes run wood splinters into his fingers so that he shouldn't be *able* to practise! The idea of having to play was repugnant to him until he made his first formal public appearance. He recalls that they would keep taking him to big colleges to make him play before the scholars. He didn't like this at all, because he knew that the other boys had a contempt for him as a sort of little freak. "They had to applaud me, whereas it was easy to see they would have preferred to punch my head. I was sorry not to be allowed out in the playground with them, because if they'd started anything of that sort I think I could pretty soon have taught them to respect me." For Mark Hambourg has always had a taste for athletics, regarding it as very important for a musician to maintain his health and physique.

Hambourg was born at Bogutschar, South Russia, in 1879. Soon after his parents were married, they had been arrested and imprisoned on a charge of Nihilism. They were certainly not Nihilists, but they had friends who were, and that created a suspicion. Eventually they were released, and they removed to London. The father, Michael Hambourg, gave Mark his first lessons, and directed all his prodigy period. Then, on the advice of Dr. Richter, he was sent to Leschetitzky, at Vienna, with whom he studied for nearly three years. It is said that Leschetitzky returned him all the fees he had paid, with the remark: "Take this, for you will need it in your career." An extract from a fellow-pupil's diary gives a vivid picture of him in class: "He marched up to the piano and sat down as usual, with a jerk, looking like a juvenile thunder-cloud. When he stopped, we burst into a storm of applause, but, grim little hero that he is, he was off into the drawing-room almost before we began to clap. Professor turned round to us and murmured: 'He has a future; he *can* play.'"

At the age of fifteen Hambourg made his debut as a soloist at a Philharmonic concert in Vienna, Richter being the conductor. Since then, as he puts it himself, "I have been to Australia, America, and in fact pretty well all over the world." He has given something like 2000 recitals. He once gave one in Milan on May 21 and one in Cardiff on May 23! The mental strain is

enormous, and he would never be able to stand it but for the distractions of stamp-collecting and photography. He says that his happiest hour is after returning from a recital. He goes to his study and plays and composes as long as the spirit moves him.

He is somewhat cynical about his calling. The professional pianist, he declares, "has enemies all through life. First his family and neighbours, when, as a child, he begins to practise; next, as he succeeds, every pianist who is less successful; next all piano makers except the one he patronises; next all musical agents except his own; next organists in general; next patriotic critics when he is in a foreign land; and last the conductor of the orchestra, who wants all the credit for himself."

Many will think it curious to find him insisting that an artist cannot be too nervous. "I don't mean that he should be afraid, but his nervous system cannot be too sensitive, too highly-strung, too ready to receive impressions. When a musician plays in the evening, he reflects impressions received in the morning—impressions derived from nature or from society. If he plays a piece a hundred times, it will be a different performance on each occasion. A musician can express any mood in any piece; but of course he could not put gaiety into a slow movement, or sadness into a quick one."

In his travels Mr. Hambourg has naturally had

some adventures. Talking to an interviewer about them he said:

"I had two narrow escapes in America. Once, at a time of floods, our train had just crossed over a swollen river, when the bridge completely collapsed. On another occasion, I was very much annoyed because, owing to somebody's mismanagement, I lost a train that it was very important to catch. But anger changed to a very different emotion when news arrived that that particular train had gone over an embankment, all the unfortunate passengers being killed outright or badly injured. On my first visit to the States, the journey from San Francisco to Denver yielded some excitement. We had been waiting half an hour at a wayside station, when, growing impatient, we made inquiries, and were dumbfounded to find that our car had been inadvertently unhitched, and that the train had gone on without us. As I was due to play at Denver next day, it was a terrible predicament for me. But a solution was found. The railway people provided us with a special locomotive capable of overtaking the mail before nightfall. But while they were hitching it on, the supposed cause of our trouble was discovered, in that our party numbered thirteen. Sixty miles an hour on a rough road is a sufficiently hazardous experience to contemplate at the best of times, but for thirteen travellers to take the risk was not to be thought of. That, at least, was the view of the superstitious members of our party. Something must be done, and quickly—but what? Nobody cared to alight at that out-of-the-way station; hundreds of miles from everywhere. Well, there chanced to be a preoccupied old

nigger sauntering about the platform, and before that old nigger knew what had happened he had been kidnapped and thrust into our car, which at once proceeded on its journey. The language the poor old fellow used! We must have gone nearly a thousand miles before he was induced to take a reasonable view of the situation. But I think the pecuniary compensation we paid was ample, and I trust Mrs. Nigger was not very anxious. We overtook the mail."

Once, during a South African tour, he had to get the help of a party of coolies to carry his grand piano from the station, and allowed them to listen to the concert from the wings. Coming off the platform and wiping his brow, he observed to one of the coolies: "It's hard work playing." "Oh, is it?" was the reply; "you should try lifting."

But perhaps his most exciting experience was at Warsaw in 1908, when he was compelled to play to a powerful section of the revolutionary party in what seemed to be an underground meeting-place. To find himself recalled twenty-six times and obliged to play six encore pieces the next evening at the Warsaw Philharmonic Society's concert, where revolutionists turned out in full force, was a magnificent reward. Less eminent pianists might not find the ordeal of soothing the savage revolutionary breast quite so satisfactory; but doubtless Warsaw, like other places, could do without some of its pianists. Even a revol-

utionist may have his legitimate uses, and this incident suggests one of them.

Mr. Hambourg's brothers, Jan and Boris, are well known, the one as violinist, the other as 'cellist. They are now both with their father at his Conservatoire in Toronto. The father could not stand the English climate, and Mark, after a recent tour, came to the conclusion that Canada is the land of opportunity.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN SILOTI

ALEXANDER SILOTI IS DESCRIBED IN A leading musical dictionary as "an imposing pianist" who is "considered one of Liszt's most remarkable pupils." Liszt had a good many remarkable pupils who are also imposing pianists, but Siloti is probably the only one who has recorded in book-form his experiences with the master. *My Memories of Liszt* contains, as a matter of fact, nearly as much about Siloti as about Liszt, but it is none the less interesting on that account.

This "imposing pianist" was born in South Russia in 1863. He became a pupil of Nicolas Rubinstein and Tschaïkowsky at the Moscow Conservatoire, and Rubinstein left him there when, in 1880, he went to Paris, to die shortly after. Siloti tells that at their last interview Rubinstein called for wine, and, clinking glasses, gave this parting advice: "Love women and wine, but, above all, be a gentleman."

Passing his final examination at the Conservatoire, and carrying off the gold medal, Siloti was advised to take some lessons from Anton Rubinstein. But Anton had neither patience nor skill as a teacher, and Siloti says the lessons were a "nightmare." When arranging for the first lesson, six weeks ahead, Anton told Siloti to prepare for it four works which he knew Siloti had not played before—Schumann's "Kreisleriana," Beethoven's Concerto in E flat, and the Sonata in A, opus 101, and Chopin's Sonata in B minor. A formid-

able array of pieces to be got up in six weeks, truly! Siloti admits that Anton Rubinstein's virtuosity was stupendous, but he has nothing pleasant to record of him, except that it was by his advice that he went to study with Liszt.

Now Siloti had no means of his own to go abroad for this purpose, but the directors of the Moscow section of the Imperial Russian Musical Society decided to send him to Liszt at their own expense. Nay, incredible as it may seem, they even guaranteed £1000 to meet the possible contingency of Siloti losing heavily at cards!

Siloti arrived at Weimar, knowing not a single word of German. His first lesson with Liszt had been fixed, and he took with him Chopin's Ballade in A flat. He found about twenty-five pupils present. He sat down and started the Ballade, but had only played two bars when Liszt stopped him, saying: "No, don't take a sitz-bath on the first note." Liszt then showed what an accent the player had made on the E flat. Siloti continued playing, but Liszt stopped him several times, and played certain passages to him. "When I got up from the piano, I felt bewitched," says Siloti. All at once, he had become a "Weimarite."

Siloti tries hard to express in words the fascinating personality of Liszt, and to describe the features of these lessons. "There were thirty or forty of us young fellows," he says, "and I remember that, gay and irre-

sponsible as we were, we looked small and feeble beside this old man. He was literally like a sun in our midst. When we were with him, we felt the rest of the world to be in shadow, and when we left his presence our hearts were so filled with gladness that our faces were, all unconsciously, wreathed in rapturous smiles."

The lessons took place three times a week, from four to six o'clock. And the striking thing was that anybody whom Liszt approved could come and have a "lesson," without paying a farthing. Liszt remembered his own early struggles, and being now rich and famous, it delighted him to give lessons to talented pupils without fee or reward. Not only that, but, as Siloti tells, he would take his pupils to the opera and pay for all seats and refreshments.

It was from 1883 to 1886 that Siloti studied with Liszt. But he had made his *début* in Moscow in 1880, and just before going to Weimar had won laurels at Leipzig. In 1887 he became a professor at the Moscow Conservatoire, but he has lived in Paris since 1890. Like all the other virtuosi, he has toured extensively in Europe and has visited America. He has not created a furore, but he is renowned for the brilliancy of his playing, especially in Liszt pieces, and as an interpreter of Russian piano music.

XIV. D'ALBERT & CARREÑO

EUGENE D'ALBERT HAS OFTEN BEEN taken to task for posing as a German and objecting to being described as a Scot, or at least a Britisher. In truth, his nationality is not an easy matter to decide; for although he was born in Glasgow, his father (well known as a composer of dance music) was the son of a captain in the French army and a German mother (who was of Russian descent), and his mother was a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Although born a British subject and brought up in these isles, he can hardly be called a Scotsman.

A good story is told in this connection. At the rehearsals of the London Philharmonic Society, D'Albert used to address Sir Alexander Mackenzie, then the conductor, in German! The joke lay in the fact that both pianist and conductor had been brought up in Scotland. A somewhat similar incident once happened when M. Johannes Wolff (a Dutchman who speaks English perfectly) and a London musician were conversing in French.

D'Albert, of course, had his first lessons from his father. Then, at twelve, he was elected Newcastle scholar in the since defunct National Training School of Music, London. Five years later he won the Mendelssohn Scholarship. Hans Richter, friend and willing helper of so many, recognised his talents and introduced him to Liszt. D'Albert told an American interviewer that Liszt made him a pianist by pressing

him to play. He prefers composing. He never practises except when he has to play. This merely in passing.

It is a fact that under Liszt's guidance D'Albert developed with astonishing rapidity, and when he made his first appearances in Vienna and Berlin he created a sensation. He was found to have a marvellous technique, and the intellectual maturity of his interpretations was generally remarked. He has long been recognised in Germany as a specially endowed interpreter of Beethoven, and it is significant to say that he has rivalled the pianistic feats of Von Bülow by giving five Beethoven sonatas at one recital. As has been indicated above, he fancies himself as a composer rather than as a pianist, but the musical world estimates him more correctly.

D'Albert permanently settled in Germany many years ago. He became pianist to the King of Saxony, and as a Court functionary of high degree he has the right to wear nearly a dozen decorations on his breast. He is reported a vegetarian. If he were carnivorous ——? In summer he exchanges his Berlin residence for a charming villa on Lago Maggiore. Here, in this seclusive and romantic spot, he passes a delightful existence, the pleasant hours being apportioned between composition and cycling and lawn tennis. He takes a great interest in all sports and in medical science, though in regard to the last-named hobby he by no means aspires to become a doctor of music.

An old Scottish clergyman, discoursing once on the woman of Samaria, remarked that she had "a varied matrimonial experience." D'Albert is in the same position. As one quaintly says, he "has ventured upon matrimony several times." He was first married when quite young, and it is seriously averred that when he went to report the birth of his first child to the official in the German town in which he was then living, that functionary glanced disdainfully at him and remarked that it was necessary for the father to make the report in person!

In 1892 D'Albert married the famous pianist Teresa Carreño, but the union lasted only three years. In Eastern literature there is mention made of a poor Indian who presented himself for admittance at the door of Brahma's paradise. "Have you been in purgatory?" asked the deity. "No," replied the applicant, "but I have been married." "It is all the same; you may come in," said Brahma. If all be true that is stated, both D'Albert and Carreño deserve a place in the very holy of holies.

At the age of sixteen Teresa married Sauret, the violinist. The pair went to America, but the New World was not ripe for them, and Sauret returned to Europe, leaving his wife to battle with a baby and an empty purse. The marriage with Tagliapietra (what a name!), the Italian baritone, came later. It turned out happily —for a year or two—and three children were the re-

Photograph by London Stereoscopic Company, Ltd.

ROSENTHAL

sult. By and bye the husband "developed habits which a wife could not be expected to tolerate" (such is the euphemism), and there was a "technical desertion."

Next came the D'Albert episode. Carreño admired D'Albert very much, and he was very much in love with her. As things worked out, probably it was a case of two of a trade, no less than of another woman; for D'Albert married the Dresden opera singer, Miss Finck, before the ink on the decree of divorce was fairly dry.

Though the pair did not get on together, domestically, it will be convenient to say here something about Teresa Carreño, who recently (1913) had the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of her artistic career celebrated by a dinner in Berlin. She is now sixty years old, having been born in 1853, at Caracas, Venezuela, where her father was a Minister of Finance. She was so much of a musical prodigy that at the age of nine she appeared at a benefit concert in New York. Soon after, she started her regular career as a concert pianist, and made no little sensation in the States. When only twelve she went to Anton Rubinstein, from whom she learnt the art of piano necromancy.

She met Joachim, and frequently played with him. Richter, too, she met—first in a rather curious way. She and Tagliapietra were travelling from Paris to London, and when they got into the train on the English side of the Channel, they found a large, blonde,

bearded gentleman the only other occupant of the compartment. Presently Carreño seated herself opposite him in order to get a view of the scenery on that side of the train.

She talked in French and Spanish with her husband, little supposing that the bearded gentleman would understand. Among other things, she remarked: "This gentleman opposite will think I have come here because I am in love with him, but I am not: I merely desire to view the scenery." When the train arrived in London, there was a big crowd waiting to meet Richter, and not until then did Carreño realise that she had been travelling with the celebrated orchestral conductor under whose baton she was so desirous of playing.

Among lady pianists Mme. Carreño is unique. Von Bülow, himself a great pianist, declared that she was the only woman he had ever heard play Beethoven in a satisfactory manner. She is described as "a woman of delightful disposition; affectionate as a mother, and mindful of the welfare of her children." She is also said to be an advocate of "women's rights," whatever these may be. One of her daughters, for whom she wrote the celebrated "Mia Teresita," is also to become a virtuoso.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN BUSONI

FERUCCIO BUSONI IS A REMARKABLE MAN in many ways. A brother artist remembers him well thirteen years ago in Berlin, when he used to play billiards at the Café Austria, and fill out the pauses between shots with deeply impressive discourse on art and æsthetics. Even at that time he was "recognised by the piano sharps as an interpreter of unquestioned authority, and his readings of the concertos usually settled for us all controversies that arose after the performances of the other well-known keyboard kings."

The same writer goes on to give instances of Busoni's sincerity, where his artistic convictions were concerned. Instead of putting in his programmes the "sure winners," he would select quite unknown things, if he believed them to be intrinsically good. Thus in Berlin, about this time, he decided that he would give a series of orchestral concerts at which he would conduct exclusively such compositions of living musicians as had not previously been heard in public. Musical Berlin shook its wise head. "Nobody will pay to hear such concerts," was the concensus of opinion. "He does not expect the concerts to pay," said one of Busoni's friends. "Who will make up the deficit, then?" "He will." And Busoni did.

Some few years later, Busoni settled for the summer in Weimar, and, after the manner of Liszt, gathered about him a class of student disciples. "Has he enough pupils to make the scheme pay?" some sceptic wished

to know. A Philharmonic flautist made answer: "He doesn't take any money; the instruction is gratis."

The scoffers got their final quietus when Busoni gave his monumental series of orchestral concerts in Berlin. At these he played all the important concertos in the piano repertoire, and then followed with recitals devoted singly and separately to Liszt, to Chopin, and to any other programmatic scheme he felt himself called upon to illustrate, irrespective of its box-office aspect, or its conformity to prevalent public or pianistic notions regarding the complexion of recital programmes. The same tendency to follow his own inclinations has distinguished Busoni's career ever since. His programmes often have a thoroughly unfamiliar look; and he will play things, such as the sadly-neglected Weber "Concertstück," which are voted faded and hopelessly *passé* by all the other virtuosi of repute.

Busoni is an Italian, born at Empoli, near Florence, in 1866. Both his parents were musical, and he had his first lessons from them, with such success that he appeared in concert when only seven. At eight he began to compose, and at ten he made a mild sensation in Vienna as a performer. Three years' study at Leipzig completed his professional training; and in 1888 he accepted an appointment as teacher of piano at the Helsingfors Conservatoire. From this he went to teach at the Moscow Conservatoire, and later at the New England Conservatoire in Boston. What nomads these artists are!

In 1892 he was engaged by the great piano-making firm of Steinway to give a series of forty concerts in the United States and Canada. That was the year of Paderewski's first tour in America, and the furore *he* caused rather told against Busoni. Whether or not Busoni felt chagrined, cannot be said; but when he had filled his Steinway contract, he returned to Europe to settle in Berlin. He has since made many tours, and he enjoys a world-wide reputation as a virtuoso of the first rank.

Busoni has some pet aversions, and one of them is an aversion to being interviewed. Naturally retiring and intensely severe, he looks upon the cheap publicity which some artists think necessary for success as banal. When he first visited America, he was specially irritated at the aggressiveness of the reporters. In one city he and his manager were amazed upon opening the door of the room in the hotel to find a little woman forcing her way in with note-book and pencil in hand. Busoni was in his pyjamas, and as soon as he learned what was wanted, he fled to his private room. Afterwards he confided to a friend that he believed "that woman would have had nerve enough to interview the Apollo Belvidere if her editor sent her to do it."

At the moment of writing, Busoni has just accepted the directorship of the Benedetto Marcello Conservatoire at Bologna.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN BACKHAUS

WILHELM BACKHAUS IS THE YOUNGEST of the distinguished virtuosi of the piano. Yet there is in him a kind of perception and maturity which do not come with years. When but a youth, he outdistanced many of the older virtuosi in the matter of technique, and it was natural that the musical world should inquire who this young giant was. The first thing they discovered was that he was not a pupil of Liszt, Rubinstein, Leschetitzky, or any other world-famous teacher, with the exception of D'Albert, who taught him for just a twelve-month.

Backhaus was born in Leipzig in March 1884, the fifty-seventh anniversary of Beethoven's death, and two years before the death of Liszt. Consequently he belongs to a new era of virtuosodom. When only four he began to pick out tunes on the piano, and at ten started serious study at the Leipzig Conservatoire. Although he had several times played in public since he was eight, it was in 1900 that he made what he regarded as his real professional *début* as a pianist. At that time, as we read, he had already mastered and memorised some 300 compositions, including a dozen concertos. In 1901 he made his first London appearance, and next year took Siloti's place at two days' notice at one of the Hallé concerts in Manchester. Three years later he returned to Manchester to take up the appointment he still holds as principal professor of the piano at the Royal College of Music.

BACKHAUS

By temperament and intellectual equipment Backhaus rightly belongs to the classical school of pianists. His playing, says one, may be characterised in the phrase which Herbert Pocket applied to Mr. Wopsle's conception of the part of Hamlet as "massive and concrete." He always gives the impression of having drawn his inspiration from a land of giants.

An amusing incident occurred not long ago when Mr. Backhaus, after playing at the Royal Albert Hall, London, was leaving to catch the night boat for the Continent, in order to play at the Cologne Festival the next day. As ten thousand triumphant suffragettes were passing in procession, his carriage was held up so long that he had to abandon it, and, of course, his luggage. With the help of a policeman he succeeded in elbowing his way through the crowd, crossing the stream of militant ladies, and landing safely on the other side of the road. A dash for a cab, a race to the station, and a leap into the train were the work of a few minutes. Next morning, at eleven o'clock, Backhaus arrived at Cologne without even a toothbrush, the concert being fixed for twelve o'clock. As evening-dress is the custom in Germany, even for morning concerts, an enthusiastic gentleman of the committee, who would, for the sake of musical art, even undress himself should that be required, volunteered to do so. Backhaus swiftly slipped into the kindly offered trousers, dress-shirt, waist-coat, &c. Further difficulties now arose. Back-

haus not having the essentially German figure of this venerable member of the committee, the dress-coat would fit nowhere; so Conductor Steinbach had the happy idea to request the members of the Gurzenich Orchestra to file past the pianist, who tried their coats in turn, and, as is usual in such situations, it was the last one that fitted fairly well.

XVII. SOME OTHER PIANISTS

IT IS ALWAYS INVIDIOUS DRAWING A line. If I include certain players under this heading, it is not necessarily because I think them lesser artists than those who have a section to themselves, but because they bulk less in the public eye, so to speak, and because comparatively little information is available about them. Let us take them indiscriminately, without any pretended order of merit.

There is Frederic Lamond, who has long resided in Germany, and conducts his affairs from Frankfort because he finds it central for his travelling. Like D'Albert, he was born in Glasgow, but *un*like D'Albert, he objects to being called a German pianist. He remains "an honest and blameless Glasgow chiel."

Mr. Lamond, who is now forty-five, began his musical education with his brother, and at the early age of eleven became organist of a church in his native city. During this time he devoted his attention not only to harmony, piano, and organ, but also to violin, oboe, and clarinet. Such experience must have proved of great value to him in the composition of orchestral works, of which he has written several.

But it is as a pianist that he has achieved European reputation. When fourteen he went to Germany, and studied first at Frankfort. There he made the acquaintance of Von Bülow, whose interest he aroused to a very unusual degree. Under Bülow's special direction

he subsequently prosecuted his studies in Berlin and Meiningen, and it was at Bülow's express wish that Liszt subsequently undertook the further development of the rising young pianist in 1885.

Not only did Mr. Lamond enjoy the tuition of Liszt at Weimar, but he had the privilege of accompanying him to Rome, and he only left the Abbé's side when he (Liszt) made his last journey to London. Like the other virtuosi, he has toured everywhere. He has extraordinary gifts as a pianist, and while his classical style is, in the nature of things, tinged with the traditions of the best German school, he displays an individuality and independence which entitle him to stand alone. His individuality shows itself in more than his playing, too. At Danzig not long ago he refused to proceed with his recital if Herr Fuchs, music critic of the local paper, remained in the hall. This was because of a criticism on Mr. Lamond written by Fuchs *nine years before*. To avoid a scene, Fuchs left the hall.

Then there is Arthur de Greef, probably the finest of Belgium-born pianists. He is a splendid artist, and as such avoids anything approaching exaggeration. In Mozart, for instance, he gives out the music with perfect simplicity and perfect lucidity, and consequently it speaks for itself. The beauty of his phrasing and the extreme delicacy of his touch are unchallengable in the impression they make. He has no poses and

no tricks, and, contrary to all virtuosic custom nowadays, he often has the music before him on the piano, to be sure of absolute accuracy.

Leopold Godowsky, as we have seen, is numbered second among the great living pianists by Pachmann. But he is not quite so well known in England as elsewhere. Born in Russian Poland in 1870, he was exploited as a "wunderkind," and travelled all over Russia and parts of Germany, with immense success, until he was twelve. Then a wealthy German banker took a fancy to him and arranged for his future training. Accordingly, he entered the Hochschule at Berlin, under Joachim, and remained there for two years.

An American tour in conjunction with Ovid Musin, the violinist, followed. But Godowsky wanted to return to Europe for further study, and he struck for Paris, mainly because Saint-Saëns was there. Saint-Saëns took a great interest in him, and introduced him to all the musical big-wigs. From the salons of Paris to those of London was but a step, and soon Godowsky had captured London. He played in the palaces of the Dukes of Westminster and Norfolk, and at Marlborough House—in the latter case notably during Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887, when no fewer than thirty crowned heads were present.

When he was twenty, Godowsky went back to America, and next year he married Miss Frederica Saxe, a

New York lady. He remained in New York till 1895, and then accepted a position in the Chicago Conservatoire as head of the piano department. In 1909 the press made the announcement that the Austrian Government had persuaded him to become Director of the Piano School attached to the Royal Academy of Music at Vienna. Here, by his agreement, he teaches for 200 hours a year. He is never to have more than fifteen pupils. If he likes, he can teach them at his country house. He is to have a pension, and he was credited with ten years' service before he began in 1909. His pay works out at £4, 5*s.* an hour.

Godowsky's bookings for some years have averaged from 80 to 100 important engagements annually, and in filling these he crosses and re-crosses Europe time and again, arousing wherever he appears always the same spontaneous enthusiasm. Indeed, his managers find it an ingenious task to arrange his season's itinerary, since it is nothing unusual for him to appear within the same week in Austria, Germany, England, and France.

Again, there is Mr. Harold Bauer, one of the most interesting personalities in the musical world of to-day. In the ordinary sense of the word, his training has been singularly paradoxical, since it has differed radically from the paths which most of the celebrated pianists have trod.

Mr. Bauer was born in London in 1873. His father was a good amateur violinist, and so the boy took to the violin. He made his *début* with this instrument, in London, when only ten, and thereafter made several tours of England, with flattering success. Presently, in London, he met a musician named Graham Moore, who gave him some ideas of the technique of piano-playing, which Bauer had picked up by himself without any thought of ever abandoning his career as a violinist. Moore had been engaged to rehearse some orchestral accompaniments on a second piano with Paderewski, who was then preparing certain concertos for public performance; but Moore was taken ill and sent Bauer in his place.

Paderewski immediately interested himself in Moore's talented young friend, and having learnt of his ambition to shine on the violin advised him to go to Paris to study with Gorski. Subsequently Bauer often met Paderewski and received advice and hints, but no regular instruction. In Paris he had no chance whatever to play and the first year and a half was a period of privation which he will never forget. Then a chance came to play, in Russia as accompanist for a singer touring there. The tour was a long one, and in some of the smaller towns Bauer played an occasional piano solo.

Returning to Paris with his meagre savings, he found that his position was little, if any, better than be-

fore his trip. Still, no opportunities to play the violin were forthcoming. Then the pianist (Stojowski) who was to play at a certain concert was taken ill, and Bauer was asked to substitute. His success was not great, but it was at least a start. As other requests for his services as a pianist followed, he gradually gave more and more attention to the instrument, and through great concentration and the most careful mental analysis of the playing of other *virtuosi*, as well as a deep consideration of the musical æsthetical problems underlying the best in the art of piano interpretation, he has risen to a high place in the piano world.

Raoul Pugno is less known as an independent pianist than by his association with Ysaye, the violinist. Pugno (a Parisian) and Ysaye were early friends and in their youth played together a good deal; but, as Ysaye puts it, "life itself, concert trips, marriage, children, &c., had separated us quite a little, until the time when the idea came to us to get together regularly for 'sonata evenings.'" Both Pugno and Ysaye have publicly and privately the same course of life. "After the great triumphs and joys of art comes the rest in the family circle with wife and children," says Ysaye. "And when again we step before the public we bring some of this rest and healthfulness with our art, strengthened and ennobled through our friendship. Only in playing with Pugno," he continues, "can I realise all my

thoughts. In a sort of tacit accord, and through mutual entering into the slightest variation of feeling, we make, I believe, the public understand the musical unity of the works which speak to the hearer in such different voices."

Pugno had an Italian father and a mother from Lorraine. His mother had no interest in music, but his father was an enthusiast. He gave his first concert in Paris when only six. Later he was a student at the Conservatoire: composition under "Mignon" Thomas, and piano under Georges Mathias, a pupil of Chopin. Curiously enough he acquired a reputation as an organist before he was well known as a pianist. "I am very fond of the organ and could go back to it with credit to myself," he says. He has been once in America (with Ysaye), but America will not see him again. "I have never had the fever that so many artists have to acquire wealth at any cost; my health comes first."

Pugno has a house in Paris, but he prefers to escape to his beautiful little estate near Nantes, one hour from the capital. In appearance, it has been observed, he might be anything but a musician—say a physician or a philosopher. He is a big man, with hair and beard almost white. His eyes are small and dark, and his hands fat and chubby. "My hands do not look like the hands of most pianists, but they are very supple," he says.

Basil Sapelnikoff is a pianist of the first rank as re-

gards technique, and yet not quite of the first rank in popular favour. He is a native of Odessa, and was born in 1868. His father was a teacher of the violin there, and Basil took up the violin as his chief instrument, giving a public recital on it in his native city when only eleven. Early in his teens he had the good luck to attract the friendly notice of Rubinstein, who strongly advised him to give up the violin for the piano.

This advice was accompanied by substantial aid. By Rubinstein's generous efforts a yearly stipend was obtained from the city of Odessa to enable the lad to go to St. Petersburg Conservatoire. For two years he studied there, and for three subsequent years under the celebrated Sophie Menter. By the time he left the Conservatoire his fame had already been spread abroad; and since then he has played with distinguished success in all the leading cities of Europe.

Rafael Joseffy is best known in America, for it was thither he went from the Continent in 1879, and he has been more or less associated with the New World ever since. "When he first arrived," says Mr. Henry Lahee, "he was considered by many people to be the most brilliant pianist alive. He was called the Patti of the piano, and his phenomenal technique, exquisite touch, and still more exquisite style, lent his playing an attraction that was irresistible." He became distinguished first as an interpreter of Chopin and Liszt;

but he left the platform for five years, and then reappeared more brilliant than ever.

Joseffy is a German, born at Pressburg in 1852. Karl Reinecke directed his studies at the Leipzig Conservatoire. Then he went to Berlin, where the great Tausig took him in hand, and turned him out a front-rank virtuoso. He toured the musical countries of Europe for some years, with Vienna for his head-quarters. Then, as already stated, he went to America, where he caused a sensation rivalled only by Paderewski. Stories are told of his playing during a night's social festivities from thirty to forty of the most difficult works ever written for the piano. It is a pity he is not more frequently heard in England.

Nor must we forget our native Mr. Leonard Borwick. Mr. Borwick is now a man of forty-five, having been born at Walthamstow, in Essex, in 1868. He comes of an old Staffordshire family, many members of which were musical. As a baby playing with his toys, he could name any note sounded on the piano. He did not go to Frankfort to Mme. Schumann until he was sixteen, and all his friends said he was too late. After seven or eight years' study he appeared at Vienna in 1891 in Brahms' Concerto in D minor. Brahms was present, and pencilled a post-card to Mme. Schumann telling of her pupil's success. This post-card Mr. Borwick still has.

He has been heard at all the principal musical centres in Britain and on the Continent. He is really of the school of Sir Charles Hallé, who always strove to make the music speak for itself, and not to obtrude the personality of the player. But, under the pressure of modern concert conditions, in which the soloist is called upon to play, not as he would to himself or to a drawing-room, but to a crowd, he has developed remarkably since his first appearance. He preserves his lucidity of touch and phrasing, and his mastery of the full technique of his instrument; but he has acquired not a little of the "sturm und drang" style.

Mr. Borwick loves poetry and painting, and enjoys a trip to Italy. He is fond of tennis, cycling, gymnastics, and conjuring; and is a firm believer in a fleshless diet, on which he says he can do his best work.

SINGERS

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN MELBA

"IF YOU ARE SERIOUS AND CAN STUDY with me for one year, I will make you something remarkable." That was what Mme. Marchesi said to Miss Helen Porter Mitchell, who had come from Melbourne to Paris to consult about her voice. For "Melba" is an adopted name—a contraction of Melbourne, where she was born, and where her father, Mr. David Mitchell, a wealthy retired builder and contractor, still lives at the age of eighty-six. The Melbourne Exhibition building, in which the Prince of Wales (now King George V), on behalf of King Edward VII, opened the first Parliament of Federated Australia, was one of his contracts.

A strict Presbyterian of the old school (he and his wife were both Scottish by birth, and came from Forfarshire), Mr. Mitchell had an unconquerable aversion to the theatre and the opera-house, and he resisted to the utmost of his powers the aspirations of his daughter Nellie to win fame and fortune by her beautiful voice. There is a story that, by personal entreaties, he succeeded, by defacing her posters, in limiting the audience at one of her early concerts in Melbourne to thirty individuals! Even now, when Miss Nellie Mitchell is a prima donna of world-wide renown, her father has his "doots." It is said that he has never seen her in any one of her great operatic *rôles*. In 1902, when she went back to Melbourne, seventeen years had passed since he heard his daughter sing. At one per-

formance she sang "Comin' thro' the rye," looking towards her father, and both were visibly affected.

At the age of six Nellie Mitchell had already sung —and gained an encore, too—at a school concert; but during her school days, and later, she studied chiefly the piano and organ. She became a pupil of the Melbourne Presbyterian Ladies' College, and before she was out of her teens (in 1882) she had become the wife of Mr. C. F. Armstrong, a Queensland sugar-planter, and the son of an Irish baronet. The chapter bearing the record of that youthful marriage is torn from all public chronicles: the husband's name may not be mentioned in the singer's presence.

As Mrs. Armstrong she sang for two or three years in Australia, having an engagement as principal soprano in a Roman Catholic Church. Then, on the advice of the Marchioness of Normandy, she decided to take up the study of music seriously, and sailed for London, fame, and fortune.

Those who like to read of youthful precocity will find plenty of material in the Melba biography. There was nothing of the prunes and prisms about Miss Nellie Mitchell. Musical critics are sometimes blamed for failure to recognise genius on its first appearance. It will be some comfort for them to learn that when Melba came first to London after some successes in Australia Sir Arthur Sullivan did not think her good enough for the Savoy Opera Company, and Signor

Alberto Randegger would not even take her as a pupil! Not long afterwards, however, she sang to Marchesi, who at once recognised extraordinary possibilities. For Marchesi Melba was "l'élève de mes rêves." After nine months' study she appeared in opera at Brussels, and the telegraph carried news of a great triumph all over Europe. Those who have seen Melba only during recent years may not know that she has played Elisabeth and Elsa and even Brünnhilde. The last part she studied for two years, only to give it up after a first public performance. Strongly emotional parts are not for a singer whose voice is of such limpid perfection. Melba, like Patti, knows how to take care of her wonderful gift.

During twenty years at Covent Garden, she sang close upon twenty different *rôles*, but more recently she has limited the list of her parts. She created the part of Nedda in "I Pagliacci," and is identified, as indicated above, with three Wagnerian characters—Elisabeth, Elsa, and Brünnhilde. During these twenty years at Covent Garden she established a record which will not be beaten for a century or two, if ever. No previous prima donna had sung in London for twenty years without missing a single season, and the odds against any future one accomplishing the feat must be overwhelming.

For nearly a quarter of a century now she has held a pre-eminent place, and her career, with its number-

less tours in all quarters of the globe, presents such an unbroken series of triumphs that space need not be wasted in chronicling it. Tributes innumerable have been paid to her by contemporary composers and musicians. Gounod found in Melba "the dear Juliet for whom I hoped." Delibes wrote of her "ideal voice, with its superhuman purity." Massenet christened her 'Mme. Stradivarius." Calvé wrote: "You sing like an angel." Joachim said that "as an example of unaffected purity in vocal art, Melba surpasses all other singers of our time." Once Joachim wrote to her: "I felt a great blank when you left Berlin. Let me not thank you for your glorious singing at my house; but let me tell you that I think it a blessing to realise the idea of your existence, and that you gave me your friendship! How did I deserve it? But I will guard the heavenly gift. All the people that met you are still under the charm of last Thursday evening. It is not the singing only that won their hearts." By general critical consent, Melba's voice, after two decades of strenuous work, is as beautiful, matchless, and unimpaired as ever.

Melba's claim to the title of reigning queen of song was only challenged when Tetrazzini came on the scene. About that time *Punch* in a cartoon depicted the two rivals engaged in a war of gramophone records, and the progress of the subsequent struggle for supremacy was followed with keen interest by lovers of sport as well as music. The Covent Garden manage-

Photograph by M. Shadwell, Clerke

MELBA

ment might confidently reckon on a £20,000 house if it could induce Melba and Tetrazzini to sing in the same opera, for there would be a lively anticipation of unrehearsed incidents and developments.

The contrast between now and the earlier days must seem to Melba striking enough. There is one anecdote she dearly likes to tell in this connection. After a memorable concert at Hull in 1910 she was asked by a local pressman if she remembered her last visit to Hull, many years ago. "Remember it!" exclaimed Melba. "Can I ever forget it? Even the caretaker of the place was sorry for me because I had so small an audience. He came to me afterwards and said, Very sorry, madam, there's not more people here. But we didn't know you were a singer. We thought you were a violin. If I had known you could sing like you do, I'd have filled the hall myself!' It struck me as being inexpressibly funny," said Mme. Melba, "and it always does me good to think of it."

Melba has written at least a couple of essays on her art, from which other singers may derive some valuable hints. Here we learn that she memorises her parts by humming them over, or playing them on the piano. She says she carries her middle register up to F sharp, half a tone beyond the prescribed limit, but this is exceptional. She earnestly advises singers to find the natural place of the break in their voices and avoid forcing. Further, she recommends students to

gain a reasonable knowledge of the anatomy of the throat. Great success in singing, she says, is impossible to the vocalist who does not thoroughly understand breathing, attack, the use of the registers, the structure and functions of the parts above the voice box, and the relation of chest expansion to the production of tone. A beautiful voice is only the basis of vocal progress. Tone, expression, resonance, phrasing are all dependent on respiration.

"Don't," she counsels, "hack at your voice by using it to help you learn your parts. Young students do more practising than they have physical strength for. They should take more outdoor exercise, get round cheeks and bright eyes, eat and sleep regularly. Take lots of exercise and save your voice, and you will keep it fresh. When the music is firmly engraved upon the mind, then employ the voice. Practise *pianissimo* in private, and the *forte* will come all right in public."

Melba has sung, and sung greatly in many different kinds of works, but perhaps, as one critic says, her ultimate fame, like Patti's, will rest on her rendering of the old florid music of Verdi and Donizetti, with her "Caro Nome" for the outstanding example in which her unrivalled technique and the magical purity of her voice are displayed to supreme advantage.

Her beautiful red hair surmounts an interesting face: eyes large, soft, and brown; firm chin, and round, rather slender throat. Her favourite recreation, she

says (but this was in 1894) is dancing. "And do I dare to go to balls with my fortune in my throat? I do, and enjoy every minute of it. And after that I like walking and driving and riding—anything to get into the sunshine." She knows just the foods and drinks that agree with her, and touches nothing else. "I have very little variety at table. I eat about the same thing every day in the year—*café au lait*, toast, mutton-chops, beefsteak, greens, fruit, and light wine. I never touch cereals, bread, potatoes, pastry, or candy. They upset me. I have coffee and toast every morning for my breakfast. I eat fruit three times a day. I only eat broiled meat, and I take it with salad. I never, never drink anything cold; and, as I don't fancy cooked water, I live on coffee, tea, and wine."

Her hobby is the collecting of autographs. And there are her chains. "I am known everywhere by my chains, because I always wear them," she said once. The chains are long and jewelled. One is of gold, with pearls set in the links, and upon this is a ball of gold, sparkling with diamonds, which shows the dial of a watch at the under side. The other came from Russia, and is of the peculiar Russian workmanship, in silver, set with turquoise. There are handsome rings on the slender fingers and a bar of diamonds at the neck, from which hangs a heart-shaped trinket, a turquoise set in diamonds.

CHAPTER XIX. TETRAZZINI

THE BEST ACCOUNT OF TETRAZZINI'S career was given by herself when she was in Edinburgh in 1908. She was asked to tell it, and she remarked on the curious fact that only in the English-speaking cities does the public appear to be interested in the personal details of an artist's life. In South America, Italy, or Russia, there is plenty of interest in the artiste as she appears on stage or platform, but little interest in her private concerns. "No sooner, however, does a Britisher hear a singer than he wishes to know what she eats and wears and thinks about; whether she is married, and how many children she has. It is most amusing to me." Thus the lady herself.

Luisa Tetrazzini is a native of Florence, and comes of a family of professional musicians. She has a brother and two sisters older than herself—the brother with a good tenor voice, one of the sisters, Eva (retired from music after her marriage to Signor Campanini, a well-known conductor), the other sister a teacher of music in Milan. Eva practised at home when Luisa was a little girl, and Luisa used to imitate her. Luisa knew both words and music of several operas before she was even aware of the fact. She sat listening to her sister by the hour, following with the keenest interest the details of her rehearsals. After watching her stab herself with a dagger while rehearsing "La Gioconda," Luisa wanted to do the scene herself. The dagger, however, had been carefully put away, and she

was forced to use a candle instead. After singing the music of the last act, she thrust the candle against her heart, and fell to the ground, to the vast delight of her father, her sole auditor.

The parents were not anxious to encourage Luisa in singing. They had given the other two daughters to music, and they wished to keep the younger child at home. So they refused to allow her systematic instruction in either piano or singing; and as a matter of fact her whole formal study was confined to three months in a conservatoire. But Luisa had been going to the theatre and hearing Eva sing there, and she was anxious to do the same thing. Between the ages of ten and twelve, curiously enough, her voice was a contralto, very full and deep, and singers told her family that it would certainly get lower! Mme. Biancolini, one of the greatest Italian contraltos of the time, laughingly spoke of Luisa as her successor. However, when she was twelve her voice gradually began to extend upwards, and one day she was delighted to find that she could take a note higher than Eva. This was F *in alt.*

Then the struggle once more began with her parents, who at last consented to her taking that three months' course at the Liceo Musicale in Florence. It was necessary, of course, to sing for the directors in order to gain admission. When she presented herself, Signor Cecherini, who had taught her sister, turned to the examiner and said: "This is no little girl; she is

an artist." At the end of a lesson one day Cecherini remarked to her: "I can teach you nothing more; you sing like an angel."

However, she did not give up work. Though she left the Liceo, Cecherini came to her home, and she studied operas with him. In three months she knew "The Daughter of the Regiment" and "Semiramide." Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine" was to be produced at the Teatro Nicolini one night. The manager could find no one to suit him in the small part of Inez; and calling at the Tetrazzinis' house, he suddenly turned to Luisa and said: "Would you sing it?" "Yes," she cried eagerly, "but you must get me a costume." He smiled, and asked her how much money he thought she should have. She shook her head: she had no idea. He offered her £20 for four months, and she accepted. She made enough of a success for another manager to engage her at the end of the four months at a salary of £40 a month, though, of course, her voice was not definitely formed at this time.

After a season in Rome, she went to South America, and made her star *début* in the part of Violetta in "La Traviata." This was the part in which she first appeared both in London and New York, and in which fame really came to her for the first time. In Buenos Ayres she sang "Lucia" fifty-four times, the fiftieth performance being the occasion for a *fête*. One season there she received £250 per performance, the highest

figure paid her until she appeared in London. Later she sang at Rosario and Monte Video. She also appeared in Cuba, in Mexico, and in San Francisco. It was at the Tivoli Opera House in San Francisco that she scored enough of a triumph to bring her to the notice of the New York impresarios.

In Mexico she had many pleasant experiences. The theatre at Guadalajara holds over 4000. The crowds on "Tetrazzini nights" were so great that an extra force of police was placed at the box-office. In several of the Mexican cities they threw purses of gold over the footlights. One night when she was singing "Lucia," she heard the whirring of birds' wings, and as she looked up she saw pigeons fluttering down from the gallery. The feathers of one wing on each bird had been cut so that the birds could not fly but fell to the stage as some one cried: "Madame, you sing like the birds, and here are the birds at your feet."

In spite of all these successes elsewhere, Tetrazzini was still quite unknown in England. She had not been invited by the Covent Garden authorities. Many people think that England is the best paymaster for music in Europe. England is not. Tetrazzini for a good many years would not come to London for less than she was receiving abroad, and finally agreed to do so only because she accidentally had some free time owing to the cancelling of a previous engagement. She had refused all offers of "agents," who wanted her to pay

them for a London invitation. In her opinion there should be no agents. It is better for the artist to arrive at fame by hard work than by bribery, she says.

Eventually she came—and she conquered. November 2, 1907, when she appeared at Covent Garden, witnessed the most sensational *début* there since Patti's in 1861. As already stated, "Lucia" was the opera, and it is safe to say that no such singing had then been heard by the present generation of opera-goers. "The pressmen," says one, "sharpened their pencils and for weeks everybody took Tetrazzini with their morning coffee." The remaining month of the season was all too short for the public appetite. Four concerts were given at Covent Garden after the opera was finished, and then the *diva* was allowed to depart for New York, where, in January 1908, the London story was repeated with added effects.

"I was frightfully nervous on the night of my New York *début*," she says, "and for a few moments did not know whether or not I could sing. But after the first note it was all easy." With her return to England for the grand opera season, the "boom" reached its height. Melba was also singing, and partisans grew hot over the real or supposed struggle between the two for the operatic throne.

Of Tetrazzini's voice nothing can be said that has not been said before. To everything she sings, from the simple "Voi che Sapete" to the florid intricacy of

Photograph by W. & D. Downey

TETRAZZINI

Benedict's "Carnival of Venice," she brings all the resources, natural and acquired, of a most consummate artist. "There are only two ideals for singing," she says: "it must be beautiful and expressive. These are the only standards by which vocal art should be judged, and it does not matter by what method the end is achieved. It is not a question of vocal agility, but the power to convey emotion while producing a beautiful tone."

Tetrazzini has had practically no struggle for her position. With her it has been "roses, roses, all the way." "I have had to work so little," she writes. "Even now I do not have to practise vocalises assiduously, as so many singers do. The few exercises I do use I have invented for myself. I am blessed, moreover, with a good memory, and it is really true that after hearing an opera for the first time I can sing almost anything in it. Consequently, it is extremely easy for me to acquire new parts. I have learnt a part in eight days with only two hours' practice a day."

Tetrazzini was married early in life, but her husband died not many years afterwards. She has no children. She is one of the most painstaking and conscientious of artists, is notably free from the whims and caprices traditionally ascribed to the *diva*, and probably no singer of the front rank has given her managements less worry or cause for uneasiness. She comes down to the house only when she is wanted for rehearsals or performances, and she is always obliging. She has, be-

sides, a kind heart. She is always ready to give helpful advice to a young artist, and her purse is freely opened to the less fortunate members of her profession.

She is superstitious, of course—most artists are. A celebrated tenor carries a rabbit's foot when he sings; and one well-known prima donna never takes to the stage without tearing a button off her clothes for "good luck." Tetrazzini refuses to leave the wings for the stage unless she has dropped a dagger in the floor three times. If it sticks each time, it is a good omen, and she goes on, confident that all will be well. If not, it disturbs her during the whole opera. Clearly, it would be to the interest of the management, if not to the singer herself, to see that the dagger is kept well sharpened!

Asked her views of Women's Suffrage, Tetrazzini says she thinks if a woman has no voice and no family she is right to work for the suffrage. But "it is not good to take up two or three things at the same time."

CHAPTER TWENTY CARUSO

ENRICO CARUSO IS THE GREATEST LIVING tenor. Indeed the alluring, velvety, pellucid quality of his voice has perhaps never been matched in history. He has not only all the excellent qualities of the Italian, but fulfils almost all dramatic demands which can rightly be called German. Technical difficulties do not exist for him. He phrases with an ease and a sureness which astonish professionals and amateurs. His tone is produced without effort; and how smooth it is in all the vocal range, how beautiful and healthy! "An artist by the grace of God!" exclaimed a German professor, after hearing him.

This incomparable singer was born at Naples in 1873. His father was an engineer and wanted him to follow that profession. But music came naturally to the boy, and he could not help singing. The parent was annoyed, and declared that he must expect no help from him if he followed up music as a profession. Caruso worked as a mechanic for some years; later he was in a chemical factory. One day he met a baritone singer who reproached him for singing without being taught, and said he was spoiling his voice. The lad replied that he had no money for lessons. The baritone introduced him to his own teacher, who offered a three years' course of lessons on condition of receiving 25 per cent. of his earnings in the subsequent five years.

This contract broke down, and Caruso enlisted as a soldier. His colonel discovered his voice, secured

lessons for him, and relieved him of heavy duty. Meanwhile, his father had married again, and the new wife persuaded him to free the son. His brother took his place, and after eighteen months of military life he began his vocal studies in dead earnest. His voice had been so properly "placed" by nature from top to bottom that comparatively little technical training was necessary. But it is strange to recall the fact that the voice was originally not only thin and small, but that one professor could not decide if nature had intended the young man for a tenor or a baritone! When his great predecessor, Tamagno, heard him, he called him a *tenorino*, and advised him to confine himself to such light *rôles* as Wilhelm in "Mignon."

However Caruso's voice soon began to develop and strengthen, and on the day of his *début*, in 1894, it needed no prophet to foretell that a vocal wonder of the first magnitude had arrived. Had he sung for twenty-four hours daily, he could not have filled all the contracts offered him at the outset. A season at Monte Carlo introduced him to a cosmopolitan audience, and resulted in invitations to sing in Buenos Ayres, New York, Berlin, Paris, and other cities. In a word, the whole world was soon at his feet.

And what sums he could presently command! As a boy he had sung in one of the Naples churches for tenpence a week, and within a short time he was making £60,000 a year! For three performances at Ostend

he received £2000. This year (1913) he is getting £500 for each appearance at Covent Garden. In 1907 he signed an agreement to sing eighty times a year at £500 a night. That probably broke the record, because the engagement was for a series of years. But higher sums have been paid to great singers for single appearances or short engagements. Thus, Mme. Patti received £1200 a night for singing at New Orleans; Melba received £800 a night for one of her tours in America; Jean de Reszke once contracted to sing sixteen times for £7200, together with hotel expenses and the use of horses and carriages. Who would not be a popular vocalist!

For all this, Caruso considers his profession a precarious one. It needs, he says, an exceptionally good voice, a robust constitution, and incessant study, for even temporary illness puts the singer back. He has granted a good many interviews, for he is kind-hearted and obliging. But he prefers to save his voice for professional purposes. To one interviewer he said: "I dislike talk because my voice is too valuable and costs lots of money. I can't waste it, and much talk makes me nervous." Another time he said: "When I was unknown, I sang like a bird—careless, without thought of nerves. But now that my reputation is made my audiences are more exacting. Here I am to-day, bending beneath the weight of a renown which cannot increase, but which the least vocal mishap may compromise."

Many people are interested in the question of what great singers eat and drink, assuming this question to be essentially important. Caruso has satisfied such people by writing explicitly on the point. Here is what he says:

"As regards eating—a rather important item, by the way—I have kept to the light 'Continental' breakfast, which I do not take too early; then a rather substantial luncheon towards two o'clock. My native macaroni, specially prepared by my chef, who is engaged particularly for his ability in this way, is often a feature in this midday meal. I incline towards the simpler and more nourishing food, though my tastes are broad in the matter, but I lay particular stress on the excellence of the cooking, for one cannot afford to risk one's health on indifferently cooked food, no matter what its quality.

"On the nights when I sing I take nothing after luncheon, except perhaps a sandwich and a glass of Chianti, until after the performance, when I have a supper of whatever I fancy within reasonable bounds. Being blessed with a good digestion, I have not been obliged to take the extraordinary precautions about what I eat that some singers do. Still, I am careful never to indulge to excess in the pleasures of the table, for the condition of our alimentary apparatus and that of the vocal chords are very closely related, and the unhealthy state of the one immediately reacts on the other.

"My reason for abstaining from food for so long before singing may be inquired. It is simply that when

the large space required by the diaphragm in expanding to take in breath is partly occupied by one's dinner the result is that one cannot take as deep a breath as one would like, and consequently the tone suffers, and the all-important ease of breathing is interfered with. In addition, a certain amount of bodily energy is used in the process of digestion which would otherwise be entirely given to the production of the voice.

"On the subject of whether one should or should not drink intoxicants, you may inquire what practice is, in my opinion, most in consonance with a singer's well-being. Here again, of course, customs vary with the individual. In Italy, we habitually drink the light wines of the country with our meals, and surely are never the worse for it. I have retained my fondness for my native Chianti, which I have even made on my own Italian estate, but believe and carry out the belief that moderation is the only possible course. I am inclined to condemn the use of spirits, whisky in particular, which is so prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon countries, for it is sure to inflame the delicate little ribbons of tissue which produce the singing tone, and then—*addio* to a clear and ringing high C!

"Though I indulge occasionally in a cigarette, I advise all singers, particularly young singers, against this practice, which can certainly not fail to have a bad effect on the delicate lining of the throat, the vocal chords, and the lungs."

From all this, one realises that even the gift of a good voice is not to be abused or treated lightly, and that the goose with the golden egg must be carefully nurtured.

A singer of Caruso's rank is naturally able to make his own terms and exact his own conditions. A fine instance of this occurred in 1911, when the eminent tenor was down for three performances at the Imperial Opera House, Vienna. For Caruso's comfort and safety, it was provided that he should be escorted from the dressing-room to the stage and back again by his doctor, his prompter, his secretary, his impresario, and his conductor. Smoking was to be strictly prohibited in every part of the house, but Caruso himself was to be allowed to smoke if he pleased before the curtain rose, and a fireman was to be specially detailed to stand behind him to throw the unconsumed end of his cigarette in a basin of water!

When he travels, it is in royal style. During his tour of England and Scotland in 1909, a *train-de-luxe* conveyed him to his various engagements, and he had his own *chef* with him. For Caruso, as we have seen, will not have indifferent cooking. There is a good story, *ápropos*. He was once dining in the West End of London, and the cook prepared such a delightful dish of macaroni, that he insisted on going into the kitchen to thank her. He offered her a choice: either a ticket for his next concert, or a song then and there. She chose the then and there, and Caruso, one hand on the kitchen dresser, sang to her "La Donna e mobile."

He has sung under stranger circumstances than that. During one of his American tours, he had to

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CARUSO

sing in a post-office in order to get possession of a registered letter. The official refused to hand over the packet, declaring he had no proof that he was Caruso. Caruso exhibited letters, cheques, photographs; but the official, suddenly struck with a bright idea, remarked: "You claim to be Caruso? Very well, you can easily prove it by singing us something.

Thereupon the official settled himself comfortably on his stool to hear the tenor and invited his colleagues to act as judges. Caruso, finding that the only way to obtain possession of his letter was to agree to the request, gave, in his most enchanting manner, the romance from the third act of "La Tosca."

"Bravo! bravissimo!" exclaimed the officials when Caruso had concluded. "And now, here is your packet. We knew who you were all the time; only, as you charge the American public such high prices for hearing you, we thought you ought to sing us a song for nothing! Kindly sign the receipt-book, and accept our sincerest thanks."

One more anecdote may be cited. There are many people who are always trying to get something for nothing. One of their favourite schemes is to invite some artist of distinction, entertain him, and then expect—for nothing—a musical evening. Just such a party entertained Caruso. When the party was at its height, suggestions were delicately but pointedly made to the amiable singer that they would be delighted if he

would give them a specimen of his vocal accomplishments. "Why," said one of the party (a society leader of distinction), "cannot we have a little music?" "*Con amore!* With the greatest de pleasure," said Caruso. Thereupon he sat down at the piano and with one finger played the accompaniment to that American classic "Has anybody here seen Kelly?" He put a strong emphasis on the "here" and let out tones that nearly cracked the window panes. After they had recovered their breath, someone said: "Oh, Mr. Caruso! would you not give us some more?" "Certainly," said he. "*Con amore!*" With which, he sat down and again with one finger repeated the same accompaniment. "Ett ees," said he, "a greata songa. Ett geev' me da inspiration. I always feela incline to sing thata greata Americana song after I have had a greata Americana dinner with some greata Americana friends!"

At the moment of writing, Caruso's engagement is reported. In 1911 he was sued at Milan for breach of promise by a pretty shop girl of whom he had become violently enamoured. The girl claimed £10,000 damages; but, applying the old principle of Roman jurisprudence, that a promise of marriage does not involve the obligation of celebrating it, nor oblige the person thus promising to fulfil any part agreed upon, in the event of not redeeming his promise, the judges refused damages. Nevertheless, they "severely censured" Caruso, and condemned him to pay the costs of the suit.

CHAPTER XXI. CLARA BUTT

PERHAPS OF ALL LIVING ENGLISH SINGers, Clara Butt is the one who exercises the widest sway over the musical affections of so-called "unmusical" people. In this respect she resembles the late Antoinette Sterling. For such people, and for all who appreciate fine singing, she lavishes her resources of voice and feeling on "The Promise of Life"; on the noble depths of "Ombra Mai Fu"; on the virile patriotism of "Land of Hope and Glory"; on the cynical gaiety of Donizetti's "Il Segreto." Her own favourites are Mendelssohn's "O Rest in the Lord," and Liddle's "Abide with Me," which latter she finds the prime favourite everywhere. Next to it comes "The Lost Chord," of which, she says, "we English have every right to be proud as of any song ever written." She is of opinion that we are gradually breaking away from the "sickening sentimentality" in songs that was once so dominant.

Clara Butt takes a very exalted view of her vocation. "I believe," she says, "that it is within the power of an artist to actually lessen, or, at any rate, to temporarily relieve the cares and worries of which each member of an audience has a share; and I am sure that the easiest way to do so is to sing songs whose meaning and whose message is immediately understandable." For this reason she always chooses as many songs as possible in English.

Clara Butt was born at Southwick, near Brighton,

in 1873. Her people removed to Bristol, and she studied for some years there with a local professor, Mr. D. W. Rootham. In 1889 she gained a scholarship at the Royal College of Music, where she soon distinguished herself at the students' concerts, particularly in the performance of opera. Her regular *début* was made at the Albert Hall, London, as Ursula in Sullivan's "Golden Legend," December 1892. Her commanding presence and the extraordinary beauty of her voice made a great impression, and concert engagements began to flow in at once. Next year she made her festival *début* at Hanley; sang also at the Bristol Festival; and in 1894 appeared at the Handel Festival in the Crystal Palace. She is still particularly fond of singing in oratorio, especially if the performance is in a cathedral.

In 1895 she decided upon further study, and went to Paris to have lessons from Mme. Etelka Gerster. When she returned to England it was "with all her powers, vocal and artistic, fully developed, to take at once her unique place among great singers." She became associated with Mr. Kennerley Rumford, and the pair got married in 1900, after a joint tour which was "turned by the interest of the public in the approaching event into something of a triumphal procession."

A word or two about Mr. Rumford here. Born in London in 1871, he began to study for the army and went abroad to learn languages. Taking singing les-

sons in Paris, he was strongly advised to enter the profession. His master at this time was Signor Slariglia, who had taught the De Reszke brothers. Returning to England in 1896, he had further lessons from Professor Blume, Mr. Plunkett Greene's master, and soon appeared successfully at the more important concerts in London and the provinces. Since his marriage, his musical career has, of course, been linked entirely with that of his wife. His country may well be proud of his fine voice, his cultured and interesting style. He is, it may be noted, a keen cricketer, a good rider, and a keen golfer.

It is a belief held by a great many people that only those can sing who possess a throat and vocal organs suitable for voice production. Clara Butt does not agree with this at all. "My view," she says, "is that if you are meant to be a singer you will be a singer." This view she illustrates from her own experience. When she was studying at the R.C.M. she was constantly being urged to have her tonsils cut. For a long time she held out against it, but at last consented. However, when she was actually seated in the operating chair, the doctor asked her to sing the vowel "e" on a high note. She did, and he remarked upon the way her tonsils contracted as she sang.

All at once, she recalled the case of a girl she knew who had lost the ability to sing in tune after her tonsils had been cut. This decided her in an instant: it

might be the same in her own case. "I refused to let the operation be performed," she writes, "and from that day to this have never allowed my throat to be tampered with surgically in any way. Yet I have had every sort of a throat that a singer would wish to avoid without my voice being affected in the least. I started life, almost, with diphtheria, have suffered from adenoids, and have experienced several attacks of quinsy. Among myself and my three sisters, all of us being singers, my throat is the worst of the lot and not in the least like a singer's throat. The sister whose voice most nearly resembles mine is the one whose throat is most like mine, and the sister who has a throat and vocal organs which are ideal from an anatomical point of view possesses a soprano voice which, though particularly sweet, is not strong."

It is generally agreed that the mind plays a prominent part where the voice is concerned. But this depends on the individual. Clara Butt says that whatever be the condition of her mind or body, she is able to sing in a sort of sub-conscious state. And this she proves by citing a weird experience. At one time and another she has had to have operations performed which necessitated her being put under ether. On every single occasion she has sung in full voice while under the anæsthetic!

This was most remarkable on the occasion when she was being operated on for appendicitis, for then the

abdominal muscles which control the breathing must naturally have been interfered with. "My husband," she writes, "will probably always recall another occasion of the kind as one of the most unpleasant experiences he has ever had. He was anxiously awaiting in another room the verdict of the doctor—the operation being a serious one and my life actually in danger—and was horrified, at a time when he knew a crisis must have been reached, to hear me suddenly burst out into song—a song he did not know, but all who heard it say it was sacred in character and very melodious, and that I sang in full voice. The fact is that trouble, worry, or ill-health have no effect upon the voice itself. The voice is always there: it is only the power of using it that may be impaired." The point is somewhat debatable, but at least the lady's insistence on it has furnished us with some startling personal experiences.

Clara Butt takes care never to overwork her remarkable voice before a concert. She wants to be at her very best on the platform, and to this end rests both body and voice beforehand. In her counsels to young singers she says: "Remember that while polishing is highly desirable, there is such a thing as over-polishing, and this, instead of improving, only wears out. I am a great believer in the quiet study of a song without the aid of a piano. Not only does this avoid tiring the voice, but it enables the singer to fully grasp all the

beauty and the meaning of the words and the music, and so to enter into the spirit of the subject when on the platform." Like Caruso, she does not want to have her throat tired by talking before a concert. She has no food or drink fads. Anything that agrees with the digestion agrees with the vocal chords, she says.

She confesses that she is happiest when singing to London audiences. In the provinces she has found that Bradford, Liverpool, and Newcastle are the most enthusiastic. But America and the Colonies pay better. In 1908 she and her husband made a joint tour in Australia. They were away eleven months, and they made in that time £50,000! After this, it is amusing to learn that Clara Butt once received a manuscript song with a remittance of 13*s.* 6*d.*, and an intimation from the composer that he would make it 15*s.* if she would sing the song regularly.

Photograph by Ellis & Walery

CLARA BUTT

CHAPTER XXII. EMMA CALVÉ

IN 1896 A MAGAZINE WRITER TOLD OF A visit to Calvé in Paris. He found her rooms charming. As he leant back in the soft easy chair, he noticed with what excellent taste she had selected yellow and white as a background to her own dark beauty. A piano between the two large windows contained many photographs of celebrities and titled personages, all autographed, and offering the originals' homage to "the adorable Carmen." Ellen Terry's portraits were prominent, each bearing some kindly expression of sentiment in her own hand. On one was inscribed: "One lesson in English I will give you—'I love you'—that is all.—Ellen Terry." The spirit of Calvé in short, was felt all through the house. She is fond of light and colour; and is a firm believer in the beneficence of sun and air. She has her windows open nearly all day.

Calvé's family are descended from the Albigenses. As befits a Carmen, she was born at Madrid, in 1864. Her father, a civil engineer, died when she was sixteen. Her mother, a Frenchwoman, was left in poor circumstances with the care of a family of whom Emma was the oldest. The girl's training had been of a strictly religious nature, first at the Convent of Ste. Affrique, and afterwards at the Sacred Heart Convent at Montpellier. The quiet life of the convent held out strong attractions for her; but the thought of taking the veil was overcome by pressing necessities at home. Her help was needed to support the family, and this

finally decided her career. She was singing one day in the convent chapel, when a gentleman from Paris heard her; and, knowing the circumstances of the family, pressed her mother to send the girl to Paris for training. She shrank from going; but as she characteristically says, "Fate was too much for me," and, shortly after, Emma entered upon the course of training which led up to her marvellously successful career.

It is not remarkable to record that in the career of the prima donna there occurred a period when the outlook seemed dark and discouraging. The critics had been harsh. Her singing qualities were beyond question; but she lacked, they said, every essential of an actress. In addition to this, her suffering was intensified by an unhappy love affair, in which she idealised the passion and its object, only to realise the bitterness of her illusion when she came to earth again. Moreover, she endured great privations from poverty, though afterwards she took the view that to the artist suffering is as essential to success as audacity. Heartsick, depressed mentally and physically, the girl of nineteen returned to her home in the Pyrenees, to await, as it proved, the awakening of her highest temperament. She drew from nature the art of living; the child became the woman, and she returned to Paris matured, buoyant, and hopeful. A period of sojourn in Italy followed, where she first saw and heard Duse. The great artist's acting was a

revelation to the young singer, and she saw her in many *rôles*, but never in "Cavalleria Rusticana"; so that Duse in no way influenced her conception of the great *rôle* she was afterwards to undertake. Calvé's impassioned acting, her magnetic personality, and admirable voice won for her a most brilliant success in Italy, where she appeared at La Scala and other leading opera-houses.

It was in January 1892 that she created the part of Santuzza at the Parisian *première* of "Cavalleria Rusticana." Three months later London heard her and Mascagni's opera together for the first time. She also sang in the first English performance of "L'Amico Fritz" and created Amy Robsart in De Lara's opera. Her name is furthermore connected with the initial hearing of two of Massenet's operas, "La Navarraise" in London (1894) and "Sappho" in Paris (1897).

But it is with Carmen above all that the dark-eyed Emma Calvé must always be associated. Carmen is a *rôle* that exercises a great fascination over artists. It offers so many opportunities and can be played (and sung too) in so many different ways. There are four elements in Carmen's character: she was a daughter of the people, she was a reckless flirt, she was full of passion, and she was superstitious. The differences between one Carmen and another resolve themselves into a question of the greater or lesser prominence given to one or other of these. One is a greater flirt

and more heartless; the other is more sensual; the third is more plebeian. Some Carmens love Don José and merely play with Escamillo; others love Escamillo and regard Don José as a bore. Mme. Roze's assumption emphasized the "brutal animalism" of the gipsy less than that of Minnie Hauck, but the latter's representation was followed in all its essential details by Calvé, as well as by Pauline Lucca and Zelie de Lussan. The seemingly reckless audacity of Calvé's realism in this part is controlled and guided by the powers of selection and creation that belong only to the greatest artists, and reinforced by an exquisitely sweet and perfectly trained voice. The combined result is unforgettable.

Mme. Calvé says she often longs for something higher and better than opera: she would like to be an actress pure and simple. If she were to lose her singing voice, she would at once leave the operatic stage for the legitimate drama. She is full of dramatic earnestness. Before looking at the music of an opera she reads up the subject in history or fiction, and if possible goes and mixes with the people of the country where the scene is laid.

Calvé has toured all over the world, but has a strong liking for American audiences. "They are kind, friendly, and infinitely more impressionable than Parisian audiences," she says. And of course America pays her handsomely. In 1904 she concluded an engage-

ment with an impresario to give seventy concerts in the States at a fee of £400 a night, so that in little more than six months she earned the princely sum of £28,000. She had been previously paid £300 nightly for singing in opera in America.

Calvé has a superb lithe form, and the large dark eyes and delicately-modelled features give her a charming appearance. She is frank, cordial, young-spirited, easy-going, and is intensely admired, both by her associates at the theatre and in the drawing-room. She is a curious combination of the developed woman and the simple girl. No one can prevent her from saying and doing as she pleases; but her impulses are seldom unkind. She cares less for the social adjuncts of her art than any other singer of her time. In this connection she has forcibly expressed her opinion: "Do you think," she says, "that ignorant people, with their silly compliments, please me? Do you think I like to go off the stage half dazed from playing Ophelia, or half ill from Carmen, to hear half a dozen chattering magpies talk nonsense while my mind is occupied with my creation?"

Calvé has one hobby—an intense love of the mystics. She believes thoroughly in spiritualism, theosophy, and astrology. The occultism of India has an intense charm for her, and on every public appearance she carries with her an amulet from Hindustan as a talisman. Whenever she sings, this topaz is worn, and nothing can induce her to appear without it.

Calvé's permanent home is in Paris, but she spends her vacations at a delightful *château* in the Cevennes. There she often sings in the village church, and in the cottages of the peasants; even in the open air her voice is heard. She loves to ramble and draw from nature not only the material for revitalising the ruddy constitution with which she is blessed, but also those inspirations which later, amid the pomp and splendour of social display, are to charm her thousands of admirers in every part of the world who are yearly enchanted by her passionate acting.

XXIII. MME. KIRKBY LUNN

MME. KIRKBY LUNN, WHO IN PRIVATE LIFE is Mrs. Kearson, has many claims to distinction. She was the first artiste of British origin and trained in England to achieve a prominent position at Covent Garden in the grand season and at the Metropolitan Opera House of New York. She was also the first artiste to sing in English the parts of Kundry in "Parsifal," Brangäne in "Tristan and Isolde," and Delilah in "Samson and Delilah," perhaps the greatest triumph of her career. In his Reminiscences Sir Charles Santley writes of her: "Since Pauline Viardot sang at Drury Lane in 1858, only one great lyric artist has appeared at the Opera. Her name is Mme. Kirkby Lunn. She is," he adds, "the most accomplished singer I have ever heard."

The lady thus eulogised was born in Manchester in 1873. She knew her future husband (a distant cousin) from her twelfth year, and he encouraged her to sing, playing her accompaniments with enthusiasm. She took singing lessons locally, and in 1893 went to the Royal College of Music, where she gained an open scholarship, and studied under Signor Visetti. In student performances of Schumann's "Genoveva" and Delibes' "Le Roi l'a dit" she showed such fine promise that Sir Charles Stanford selected her for the part of Norah in the production in 1896 of his "Shamus O'Brien," and her success in that *rôle* secured her a five years' engagement at Covent Garden for small

parts. Sir Augustus Harris' death ended the contract, and for three years, from 1897 to 1899, she toured with the Carl Rosa Opera Company as their principal mezzo and contralto, both in their London and provincial engagements.

In 1899 she married and abandoned the stage for a time to sing for Mr. Robert Newman in concerts at Queen's Hall and elsewhere. But, in May 1901, she reappeared at Covent Garden as the Sandman in "Hänsel and Gretel." Next year she sang at the Sheffield and Norwich Festivals, and paid her first visit to America. In 1909 came her greatest triumph—that magnificent performance of Delilah already indicated. She remains famous for the rendering of this *rôle*, as well as of Carmen and Orfeo (Gluck).

Of course she has suffered the usual Yankee interviewer. In 1910 she told a St. Louis pressman that everywhere in America she found people mad for opera and high-class music. In England, when she left, the people were wild about land and whisky taxes, not to mention the House of Lords and the suffragettes. Whereas here in the States the women talk music and the men baseball. She remarked this to a nice American, who said, "Oh yes, that's the way our interests are very properly divided." "Who manages your political affairs?" asked Mme. Lunn. "We hire a President and Congress to take that off our minds," was the reply. "And the trusts prefer politics to music and baseball,

and that helps us a bit." Mme. Lunn says the English are very serious. Everyone wants to pin a suffragette button on her. Poor men talk of Henry George, and rich men growl at the growing impudence of the lower classes. She considers that the career of the woman singer is not easy. To keep a reputation is harder than to acquire it. Each success means a new standard.

Yet the rewards are great. She is content.

XXIV. PLUNKETT GREENE

"MR. PLUNKETT GREENE AND MR. KENNerley Rumford are both young baritones, both of good family, both fond of sport and of fishing. Both were married last year, and both became fathers last month. Mr. Greene's son was born July 1, and Mr. Rumford's daughter on July 4. Mr. Rumford had a concert engagement for July 3, but he could not leave home, so Mr. Greene, whose anxieties were over, sang for him."

This paragraph is taken from a musical journal of 1901. A good many things happen in twelve years, but Mr. Plunkett Greene is still a master of thoughtful interpretation, whether in oratorio, in the *lieder* of Schumann and Brahms, or in those delightful arrangements of Irish melodies by Stanford and Somervell which he has made peculiarly his own.

For Mr. Greene is an Irishman—born at Wicklow in 1865. He drifted into music literally by accident. Being at Clifton College for his education, he was smashed up at football, and took a year to recover. This prevented his going to Oxford and preparing for the Bar. Meanwhile his voice developed, and he went abroad to have it trained.

He made his first public appearance in "The Messiah" at the People's Palace, London, in January 1888, and soon became a familiar figure at London concerts. He sang also in opera at Covent Garden, but opera was not his *forte*. At the Gloucester Festival of 1892 he sang the name-part in the oratorio of "Job," speci-

ally written for him by Sir Hubert Parry, whose son-in-law he became eight years later; and in 1893 he began a happy and still-continued association with Mr. Leonard Borwick, the pianist.

He has toured successfully in Germany and America; and he finds that the most keen and least *blasé* concert audiences are in the States and Canada. In our own country, he says, northern audiences are superior to southern. Public school boys make a splendid audience. Mr. Greene can always tell if his song makes an impression; there is a kind of magnetism that passes to and fro between singer and audience. Many songs are received in silence because the tribute to them is not applause. With an intelligent audience Mr. Greene never feels tired. He is nervous at the prospect of a public appearance, but this feeling disappears as he steps on the platform. His recitals are trying. He sings for an hour and a half with his body at nervous strain, his mind and memory occupied, and his throat muscles hard at work. He ridicules the stories that are current about many professional singers. "A singer, for example, who drinks or uses drugs, is bound to go under. People seem to enjoy retailing scandal of this sort."

Mr. Greene has made a name for himself as an expounder of the art of singing. He has lectured frequently on the subject, and his name is on the title page of a book published by Macmillan. In this book

he takes you behind the scenes and shows you how to study, how to "bring out the grain" in a song. There are quotations to cap every point for the intellectual singer, and a number of songs are fully analysed for interpretation.

Mr. Greene propounds three rules which must be observed by all who would render a song properly. In the first place, the rhythm of the song must be religiously preserved. The necessity of taking breath should never under any circumstances be allowed, as it so often is, to interrupt the march of the rhythm. The second rule is: sing mentally through the rests. From the first introductory note on the piano to the final note of the concluding symphony the singer should be taking part with his "mental voice." The third rule is that singing should be speech in music. Words should be pronounced in singing just as they are in conversation. On the whole subject he summarises his views as follows: (1) Granted the gifts of technique and the observance of the rules; (2) Find the atmosphere of your song, and sing it as a whole; sing it as you would speak it.

Mr. Greene has been the victim of printers' errors, like other people. He was once announced to sing the "Eel Ring" (Erl King) and the "Heavy Cow" (Kerry Cow)!

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

VARIOUS VOCALISTS

JOHN COATES

FEW SINGERS, IT HAS BEEN TRULY SAID, can boast of so complete an equipment, vocal, intellectual, and temperamental, as Mr. John Coates. He can act as well as sing, and he is a fluent linguist besides. This eminent tenor was born at Girlington, near Bradford, where his father was choirmaster at one of the churches. He did a good deal of singing in church choirs and choral societies as a boy.

His ambition always was to be a singer, but his father died when he was twelve, and he had to go into an office. However, all his spare time was given to musical study, and after gaining some local reputation (his home was then in Bradford), he threw up the office and proceeded to London with his wife and child. He possessed less than £100 with which to fight the world. It was his idea to study at the Royal Academy of Music, but on calling there, found he would have to pay a guinea to be heard. So he returned to his little home and consulted his wife, who thought that *he* ought to be paid the guinea for singing. Presently he managed to arrange for lessons with William Shakespeare; Mr. D'Oyly Carte heard him, and a *début* in "Utopia Limited," as well as a tour in America, resulted.

Five or six years followed of comic opera work, till, in 1900, he made his first great success as Perkin Warbeck, in "The Gay Pretenders," at the Old Globe

Theatre. Next year he had his first festival engagement at Leeds, and since then his name has seldom been absent from festival programmes. He has appeared at Covent Garden in various *rôles*, and has besides been engaged at the Royal Opera Houses of Berlin, Hanover, and Leipzig. He is popular in many other German cities, where he is known as a singer of *lieder* and in oratorio. In 1911 he went on a lengthy tour with the Quinlan Opera Company, as principal tenor, in South Africa and Australia. Mr. Coates' recreations are pleasantly alliterative, being golfing and gardening.

ROBERT RADFORD

The true *basso profundo* is a rare bird nowadays, but in Robert Radford we have a real and distinguished specimen. He is best known perhaps on the concert platform, but the quality and compass of his voice serve him well for opera, especially for such Wagnerian parts as Fasolt in "The Rhinegold" and Hunding in "The Valkyrie." He has frequently been heard at Covent Garden in both these *rôles*, and he was chosen to sing them when "The Ring" was first produced in Scotland, at Edinburgh, in 1910.

His favourite parts are, however, he says, King Mark, in "Tristan," and the bass solos in Haydn's "Creation." Since his first important engagement at the Norwich Festival in 1899, he has been constantly engaged in festival work, and has sung for nearly

every great choral and orchestral society in the kingdom. His concert repertoire includes, of course, all the old deep-bass favourites, such as "In Cellar Cool," and many newer things. He complains that in these days all bass music is written for a high baritone.

Mr. Radford was born at Nottingham, in 1874, the son of a lace manufacturer. He had his musical training at the R.A.M., of which he has been a Fellow since 1906. His recreations are golf, sketching, and musical composition. He has published several songs, though under a pseudonym.

WATKIN MILLS

Beside Mr. Radford may be placed Mr. Watkin Mills, described in one work of reference as a "bass-baritone." Mr. Mills is a regular globe-trotter, known and applauded wherever the English language is spoken. He has been many times to America and Canada, and has had the most enthusiastic audiences in Australia and New Zealand.

He was born in Gloucestershire in 1856, and his mother declared that he could sing before he could walk! He sang soprano till he was sixteen; playing flute and harmonium, too; and after his voice "broke" he served for a few years at Wells Cathedral. Then he went for further study, first to London and afterwards to Italy. He had so far been engaged solely in church music and oratorio, and he felt that Italy, from

its more dramatic leanings, would give him greater breadth and better style. "We English are too level, too cold," he says; "the Italian warmth needs to be infused into our singing."

When he came back to England, it was to sing with Sims Reeves at the Crystal Palace, and it was not long before he was engaged for all the big concerts and festivals. He likes oratorio work, and his favourites here are "The Messiah," "Elijah," and "The Creation." His song repertoire is immense. He generally begins with the best music and finishes with lighter ballads, folk songs, and new songs. His *tour de force* was in Canada, where he sang 103 songs in five successive nights! Such Herculean tasks are possible to him because he is strong physically. He does not find it necessary to be cranky about diet. "Good, plain, well-cooked food is all I require," he says. He takes no particular precautions for keeping his voice in order; but before a big programme he finds an afternoon nap a wonderful restorer, resting both brain and voice. His favourite recreation is—golf!

Mr. Mills has an original notion for dealing with the incorrigible people who persist in talking while music is going on. He would "sing at them till they stop!" One envies his endurance. Some years ago there was a man going about who undertook to swing clubs for twelve hours every day for a week without stopping. If Mr. Watkin Mills feels himself equal to something

of that kind in regard to his voice he may succeed with the talkers; but one fears that he will tire himself out long before the talkers are tired.

ADA CROSSLEY

Miss Ada Crossley (since 1905 Mrs. Muecke) is a well-known contralto: born in Australia, her mother being a member of the poet Cowper's family. She began her musical studies early, and between twelve and fifteen regularly led the singing at certain churches in her village. Then she took to the piano, and travelled to Melbourne, upwards of 50 miles, twice a week for lessons.

It was in Melbourne that she made her first public appearance, in 1892. Coming to Europe in 1894, she had lessons from Mme. Marchesi, and also received training in oratorio work from Sir Charles Santley. She made her London *début* at Queen's Hall in 1895, and since then she has appeared at nearly every great festival in the Empire. At the Leeds Festival of 1898 she had a curious experience. At the performance of "Elijah" (in which she had not been set down to sing) the contralto soloist did not appear, owing to a mistake she had made as to the hour of the performance. "Where's Ada Crossley?" anxiously asked Sir Arthur Sullivan, the conductor. "Sitting in the audience," was the reply. "Fetch her up," said Sullivan, and

Miss Crossley, who knew "Elijah" perfectly, came to the rescue and made her mark.

She had no fewer than five "command" appearances before Queen Victoria within two years. It was during the dark days of the South African War that, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, the Queen listened to a performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah," and when Miss Crossley sang "O Rest in the Lord," the venerable monarch was seen to be weeping. Miss Crossley's principal recreations are riding and driving, and she has strong literary tastes. She begins the day with Danish calisthenics, including a vigorous use of the skipping-rope. Then she has a canter on Hampstead Heath. Her accompanist next attends her and she tries over new and old songs in her repertoire of four or five hundred.

JOHN M'CORMACK

To the National Irish Festival of 1903 belongs the honour of finding Mr. John M'Cormack, one of the foremost lyric tenors of the day. For Mr. M'Cormack is an Irishman, born at Athlone in 1884. He had hopes of entering the Civil Service, and never thought of music as a profession until he won the gold medal in a tenor-singing competition at the above-mentioned festival. During the same year he made his *début* as a public singer in Dublin, and obtained a post there in the Roman Catholic Cathedral.

Next year he went to America, and sang at the St. Louis Exhibition. Later, he was in Milan for study, and made such progress that, within a few months, he appeared in Mascagni's "L'Amico Fritz." We read that, at the age of twenty-three, unheralded and unknown, he came to London in search of an engagement, which at first was hard to find. At last he was given a trial at a ballad concert, where the audience were not slow in recognising what has been characterised as "the most remarkable native voice which has been heard in London within recent years." Other concert engagements rapidly followed; and in the autumn of that same year (1907) he made a triumphant entry at Covent Garden as Turridu in "Cavalleria Rusticana." The London Irish turned up in great force to greet their countryman; and it is said that their cries of applause, in the native Erse, greatly puzzled the Italian occupants of the gallery.

During the same season Mr. M'Cormack appeared five times in "Cavalleria," twice in "Don Giovanni," and twice in "Rigoletto." He sang the Duke's part in the last named on the memorable night of Tetrazzini's *début*, and, at the end of the great duet in the second act, Tetrazzini surprised everybody by turning round and shaking her colleague's hand. Since then he has been steadily adding to his laurels, not only in opera but in concert, and has been on an operatic tour with Melba in Australia. It is pleasing to add that

he does not disdain to sing such simple ballads of his country as "The Minstrel Boy" and "Come back to Erin."

AGNES NICHOLLS

Miss Agnes Nicholls deserves a place here if only because she has done much notable festival work, especially in Sir Edward Elgar's oratorios. Born at Cheltenham in 1877, she gained a scholarship at the R.C.M. in 1894, and made her first appearance before Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. In 1897, while still a student, she sang at the Gloucester Festival, and ever since she has been a favourite at all the festivals as well as at the principal London and provincial concerts. She was specially engaged for the Cincinnati Festival of 1904, and has for many seasons been a leading member of the Royal Opera Company at Covent Garden.

EDNA THORNTON

Lastly (for one must stop somewhere!) there is Miss Edna Thornton, the distinguished contralto; equally well known in opera and in concert work. She comes of a musical family, and was born in Bradford. She studied first at the R.C.M. in Manchester, and afterwards, privately, with Sir Charles Santley. Her first public appearance was at a Queen's Hall Ballad Concert, and was followed in the same week by a *début* in oratorio ("Elijah") at the Albert Hall. Since then she has done much successful festival and concert work,

and has toured with Patti. Her first "hit" on the operatic stage was made at Daly's Theatre in Franco Leoni's "Ib and Little Christina"; in 1905 she sang at Covent Garden as one of the Cloud Maidens in "Die Walküre," and has made regular appearances in grand opera ever since, notably as the blind mother in "La Gioconda," the Countess in "Andrea Chenier," and the Fortune-teller in "Un Ballo in Maschera," where her singing of the weird invocation is one of the most impressive things she has done. But especially has she proved herself an indispensable exponent of the contralto parts in "The Ring," and on one occasion in 1908 she performed the remarkable feat of singing the three *rôles* of Siegrune, First Norn, and Waltraute on the same evening.

VIOLINISTS & 'CELLISTS

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YSAYE

CHAPTER XXVI. YSAYE

THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE NAME ALways gives trouble to those who do not really know. As a fact, it is the good old name Isaiah. This the French spell "Isaïe." Substitute "y's" for the "i's," and you have it. In Brussels, where the distinguished violinist has his home, the name is pronounced "Eesaw-ee," with the accent on first and third syllables.

Ysaye is the greatest Belgian violinist of to-day. He possesses that magnetism which charms alike the musician and the amateur, because of his perfect musical expression. He has the "inexpressible something" that takes cold judgment off its feet and leads criticism captive. There are greater technicians perhaps, but no greater interpreter of certain works, such as the Beethoven Concerto.

Ysaye is a Belgian *pur sang*. He says that for four generations at least, no admixture of foreign blood can be traced on either side of his pedigree. His ancestry is, however, not Flemish but Walloon—that is to say, Celtic—which is significant of much. He was born in 1858 at Liége, where his father was conductor of a theatre band. Afterwards, the father was appointed conductor of the opera at Verviers, and Eugène, at the age of six was allowed one day, as a great privilege, to sit in the orchestra to see the opera. It was noticed that he paid no heed to the stage, his attention being absorbed in the violinists, whose attitudes he unconsciously imitated. So it was decided that he should

begin to learn the violin, and his father undertook the task of teaching him. In 1866 he went to the Liége Conservatoire, and a year later secured a second prize. But in 1868 the professors warned him that he never would be a violinist. The same had been predicted of Joachim! The rebuff he thus encountered only nerved Ysaye to greater effort, and in 1862 he re-entered the conservatoire and stayed there till 1875, with the most brilliant success.

In 1875 he made his first appearance in Brussels, and about the same time he heard Vieuxtemps play—the first really great artist he had ever heard. When Vieuxtemps died, and his remains were brought to Verviers, his birthplace, Ysaye carried in the procession the violin and bow of the virtuoso on a black velvet cushion fringed with silver.

Shortly after hearing Vieuxtemps, Ysaye had lessons from Wieniawski, travelling from Liége weekly for the purpose. In 1879 a subsidy of £96 a year was obtained for him, and he went to Paris to be placed under Vieuxtemps, with whom he lived "as one of the family." In 1879 he returned to Liége, obtaining occasional engagements, among which was one at Aix-la-Chapelle, and this led to his adventurous first tours. One of the artists there was Pauline Lucca through whom he had obtained the engagement. Having been paid, he did not return home but stayed till his available funds were reduced to a few pence,

and was on the point of asking his father for money to pay his fare back when he was requested to play at a soirée. For this he received 100 marks. Thence he went to Cologne, where his adventures were similar, and twice nearly came to the same end. It was then that Ferdinand Hiller gave him a letter of introduction by means of which he was able to travel over a great part of Southern Germany. Having left home ostensibly for one day, he returned only after several months. He had roughed it and no mistake! "At your age," he used to say to his young pupils, "I practised in a garret, and went out only when too hungry to go on playing." Now he prizes every franc he earns. When told he is avaricious, he laughs, and says "I have wanted more than I shall ever make."

The next stage in Ysaye's career was an engagement as assistant conductor and soloist with Bilse in Berlin, during which time he acquired an enormous repertoire, playing solos regularly several times every week. When he gave up the position, in spite of offers of largely increased pay, and in reliance on promises from agents, he found himself reduced to almost the same circumstances that marked his first flight from home. But from that time onwards work and reputation began to come. He went in 1881 to Norway with Rubinstein and Alexander Bull, giving concerts for the erection of a memorial to Ole Bull (Alexander's father). Later on he was at the meeting of the Allgemeine

Deutsche Musikverein at Zurich, with Liszt, Saint-Saëns, Mme. Sophie Menter, and Mme. Essipoff, and in 1883 he appeared for the first time in Paris at a Colonne concert, and then took up his abode in the French Capital. It was there that he became an ardent devotee of the new French school, and the friend and apostle of César Franck, of D'Indy, and the rest.

Ysaye is a man of large and powerful physique, of boundless physical endurance, and is never happier than when he has a morning rehearsal after a night journey, followed by a concert and another night in the train or on the sea. It is curious, when one sees great musicians on the platform, how one thinks of them as living in a world principally made up of concert halls, railway trains, and hotels, with more or less of a suggestion of intrigue in the background. One would never dream, for instance, that during a part of the year the absorbing interest of Ysaye's life is fishing, and that the pupils who follow him to the country need hope for no lessons if it is a good day for rod and river.

Ysaye is a fine-looking man, with a clean-shaven face, intellectual features, and long, silky white hair, brushed off a high forehead. He has a distinctly striking personality. His hands are abnormally large and powerful; and about the whole man there is something of invincible determination. He loves Bach and Beethoven before all else. One of his theories is that no

man should play the Beethoven Violin Concerto before he is thirty; and he acted up to this himself, for he played it in public for the first time when he made his London *début* in his thirty-second year.

Of his many experiences, he says one of the most delightful and valuable was a week he once spent with Rubinstein at his home in Russia. It was Easter week, and having nothing else to do between two *tournées*, they played all day long, and worked through nearly all the violin sonatas ever written. The adventures of a violinist always include some romance connected with his violins, and surely no great violinist ever acquired an instrument in a stranger way than M. Ysaye. On one of his tours he found himself in Hamburg, and heard of a Guadagnini to be had for £800. He tried it, and found that he could not live without it. He offered as security a charge on the fees he expected to receive but the vendor insisted on cash. There was no time to procure money, as he had to start the next day. He was in despair, and was telling his woes to some friends in a restaurant after dinner, when M. Levita, an acquaintance from Paris, joined the party. He was an ardent music-lover, and also a jeweller, and he had with him a considerable number of precious stones. These he lent to M. Ysaye, who was thus able to buy the instrument, which is still his favourite. He has also a Guarnerius, which formerly belonged to a lady who was his pupil and is now his sister-in-law.

CHAPTER XXVII. KUBELIK

IN JULY 1880 A POOR GARDENER, LIVING AT Michle, near Prague, had a son born to him. He and his good wife had one already, and wondered how they would be able to provide for a second. The gardener was the best musician in the village, and always gave his evenings and his Sundays to music. He could play, after a fashion, on almost any instrument, and was the organiser and trainer of the village band. When his elder son was seven, the gardener gave him a little violin and began to teach him music. The younger boy, who was five, clamoured and entreated to be taught as well. The father refused, saying that seven was a proper age to begin and five was too young. This went on for some time, the child continuing to plead persistently. When the father saw that the boy was really pining he gave in and began to teach him.

In three months he had outdistanced his brother, and in six months he knew more than his father. People came miles to hear him, and the little child was almost worshipped. The father received so many offers to exhibit him that it was quite evident there was a fortune in the boy. Managers were only too anxious to pave their modest cottage with gold. Here the beautiful part of the story comes in. The gardener was very, very poor, but he was also a wise man and a good one. He knew that if he made himself rich by exploiting little Kubelik as an infant phenomenon, the child's future would be ruined. So he refused all

offers, and, setting stoically to work, he toiled and slaved as never before to amass, penny by penny, the money for his son's education.

The boys went to the village school and worked with their violins until little Jan was twelve. Then the father took Jan to the conservatoire at Prague, where he was placed under the famous Maestro Sevcik, who was devoted to him from the first.

For six long years Kubelik worked hard at his violin, while his father made all manner of sacrifices to send him the money to live on. When his studies were over, on the day of the final examination, his playing created a furore. The audience was in an uproar; all the professors embraced him in turn; and the president wept with pride as he gave him his blessing. Alas! here comes the sad part of the story. Just when the boy's triumphs were beginning, the father died. It was a terrible blow to Kubelik. When he was time after time recalled to deafening applause, when women waved handkerchiefs and men silk hats, when the gallery cheered and people called his name over and over again, Kubelik's one thought was that his father had really earned all that applause, and that he ought to be there to enjoy it. He said about that time that he always played best when he imagined he saw his father in the audience.

Needless to observe, Kubelik has toured over the whole civilised world several times. He appeared first

in London at a Richter concert in June 1900. In 1902 he made his first tour in the United States, when, from sixty concerts, he netted the magnificent total of £23,000. A second tour realised £50,000; and that, with other earnings, enabled him later to buy Prince Hohenlohe's ancestral estates in Silesia for £160,000. Not bad for the poor market-gardener's son!

In 1903 he married the Countess Marianne Csaky-Szell, a beautiful girl to whom he had lost his heart on his first appearance at Debreczin in 1900. Mme. Kubelik is about the same age as her husband. When eighteen she married a Hungarian count, but secured a divorce after a few weeks. She is very superstitious. Once when her husband was playing in Edinburgh, she was assigned a hotel bedroom numbered thirteen. She would not have it on any account. She was shown into a second, and that looked out on a graveyard, and she fled to another hotel at once. In 1904 twins (girls) were born to the pair, which led a joker to remark that Kubelik is used to crowded houses!

Kubelik is not only a musical genius; he has a fine mind, and, what is more curious, he is a man of the world. He is a phenomenon in more ways than one. In boyhood he spoke only Bohemian. When he began to travel, he learnt German with unusual rapidity, picked up French, and later learnt English. When it is appropriate that he should, he spends money freely,

Photograph by Gerschel, Paris

KUBELIK

but never throws it out of the window. His idea of wealth is to do good things for people. In eating and drinking his tastes are temperate and refined. He takes scarcely any butcher's meat or wine, but enjoys a cigar after each performance. For three hours before playing he takes no food. Ten years ago he was reported as practising four or five hours daily. At a concert which he gave in Prague in 1906 his old neighbours rallied in hundreds and gossiped about his early days. "His practising drove me crazy," said a washerwoman who lived next door to him. Others spoke of the way he played in village inns, tramping the country, and receiving coppers from the peasants.

When I first saw Kubelik some thirteen years ago he impressed me as a sort of young Liszt in appearance. I found him of medium height, youthfully slender, well-made, and primly graceful. His thick, glossy, dark hair is brushed back and worn rather long *à la Liszt*, and his very pleasing, smooth young face is like a composite photograph of Beethoven, Liszt, and Mozart. His hands, supple and graceful, are said to be like Paganini's. Naturally, he takes precious good care of them. Once when he landed in New York he wore a muff in which to keep them warm. In manner he is calm and dignified; quite devoid of undue pride or self-consciousness, and too well poised to be easily disturbed.

Kubelik plays on the so-called "Emperor" Strad. It cost him £6000, and he is said to have refused £10,000 for it. The tone is magnificent. The eminent violinist says he loves all his pieces equally well, and he plays nothing towards which he does not feel devotion. In private life he is partial to great works like Bach's Chaconne and Beethoven's Concerto, because there is always something new to be found in them. He finds that show pieces are easier to play than many less complex works, in which the interpretation is hard to grasp and to express. Paganini, he asserts, is merely for the fingers: he makes no demand on the soul. He says:

"Handel's 'Largo' is simple as regards the notes, but is deep, big, and universal, and taxes the resources of the greatest violinists. It is a pity that pieces of simple construction like Schumann's Träumerei and Raff's Cavatina are avoided by the great players because they have been mishandled by students and amateurs, who put into them ideas that are foreign to the music. Had Beethoven lived twenty-five or thirty years longer, and progressed in the direction of his last compositions, he would have effected radical changes in music, abolished many old forms and established some new and free form."

Modern composers do not write appropriate music for the violin, as it requires consonance, and they delight mainly in dissonance. The old standard works for violin will remain as classics, but the compositions

written for purely virtuoso purposes must die inevitably, and more or less soon.

Kubelik regards the violin as the chief expounder of tonal beauty, and he is firm in the opinion that in playing it the performer's real aim should be to strive always for beauty, and to put himself, his heart, mind, and fingers wholly at the service of such an endeavour. "Become a part of the violin and make it sound beautiful, is always the maxim which I preach to young players wherever I go."

XXVIII. FRANZ VON VECSEY

THE NAME, LIKE YSAYE'S, IS TROUBLESOME, but you are to pronounce it "Vaiy-chi-ee." In February 1904 there appeared in *The Strad*, a monthly devoted to violin matters, a portrait of a small boy, clad in a sailor suit, and holding a full-sized violin. A few months later all London was talking of the original of this portrait, little Franz von Vecsey; and there must still be some who remember the tiny figure, with a grave face, standing on a raised platform in old St. James' Hall, executing the most difficult works with the greatest ease, to the astonishment of all present.

Franz von Vecsey was born with the silver spoon in his mouth. No struggle he with poverty. His people were wealthy—members of the old Hungarian nobility—and there was no more reason why he should take to music for a "living" than there was for Mendelssohn or Meyerbeer doing the same thing. Meyerbeer's forbears were immensely wealthy, and Frau Meyerbeer was annoyed at her son receiving money for his compositions. "My son," she said, "is a composer—but not of necessity." Neither was Mendelssohn a composer "of necessity." Von Vecsey might have taken his ease as an independent gentleman; but music, like murder, will "out," and he *had* to be a violinist.

It has been stated that Kubelik was refused at the Prague Conservatoire. Similarly, Von Vecsey (like Marie Hall) was at first refused by Joachim, who had

an antipathy to juvenile prodigies. But when he heard the boy play, he went into ecstasies. His verdict was: "I am seventy-two years of age, yet never in my life have I heard the like, and never believed it possible." And in the boy's album he wrote: "God guard thee, thou wonderfully gifted child!" After his first concert, he went up and gave the boy a hug before all the people.

Meanwhile, reports of Vecsey's wonderful gifts had been spreading, and engagements poured in upon him. His *début* was made in Berlin, and afterwards he played to enormous audiences at St. Petersburg and Budapesth. Then, in 1904, as has been indicated, he came to London. And what a furore he created, this child of eleven! Queen Alexandra made his acquaintance, and, as she reminded him five years later, he then called her "Tante Könige n," while she called him "Du"—a German pronominal form reserved for personal friends—which, added Her Majesty, "I am going to keep on calling you if you will let me." The connection between the two is interesting, for the Queen Mother approves of Vecsey's appreciation of Strauss' advanced music. "I, too, like the progress of the moderns in music," she said to him.

When Vecsey was in London in 1904, the eleven-year-old, there was a lot of gossip about him. It was told that he had a healthy appetite; that he was full of fun, and always ready for a game. One day at the

hotel he went round the corridor in which his bedroom was placed, and carefully mixed up the boots placed outside the doors, putting ladies' boots where gentlemen's boots were. He was full of pranks. Hyde Park was his favourite resort, and after a concert he would run off there and trundle a hoop. At that time it was reported that he never travelled by night unless it was absolutely necessary, and never played on the day after a journey. He never played more than three times a week, and seldom more than twice.

But that is a good long time ago, as the world moves now. Since then, Von Vecsey has played in every capital in Europe, even in the Orient. At Stockholm once, the crowd detached the horses from his carriage and dragged it back to his hotel, and Stockholm is not usually demonstrative. Royalties besides Queen Alexandra have greatly honoured him. He can show you a magnificent gold watch, the gift of the Czar; a set of studs from King Edward; a pin from Queen Ena of Spain; and other notable souvenirs.

Von Vecsey is devoted to his work, but limits his daily practice to under five hours. He leads an easy life because playing comes naturally to him. He opens a new piece, reads it through once, and then can play it by heart. He has never known what it is to be nervous. He has composed some music, but says it is so difficult that he does not think he could play it himself! One of his ambitions is to be a conductor.

"I do not suppose I can go on playing for many years: the incessant travelling is so tiring; and so I would like to conduct." In the matter of hobbies he ranks photography first. Also, strangely enough, he likes writing letters. Chopin said he would rather walk three miles to answer a letter in person than send the answer by post.

Von Vecsey began by playing on an Amati violin; later he acquired the Guarnerius on which Kubelik played for some time. Then he bought a Stradivarius, and he likes that better than any of its predecessors.

SOFT as the rain that falls on April night,
Light as the falling petals of a flower,
Dim as a misty landscape seen at night,
Low as the murmuring waves at twilight hour,
Your music held me with its strangely subtle power.
It rose and fell in lingering melody,
It held the speechless yearning of a soul,
Struggling for freedom—some great threnody
Woven in song, poured forth, a perfect whole
From those impassioned strings in mystic harmony.

THUS A RHYMSTER IN A MONTREAL PAPER in 1906. In England there was long a deep-rooted prejudice against lady violinists. It continued far into the nineteenth century. A musical journal of 1819 wrote: "We are tempted to ask why should not the prejudice against ladies playing the violin be overcome? It seems to us to be an instrument peculiarly adapted to their industry, delicacy, and precision; while what we have seen and heard of female violin-playing fully bears out the recommendation we feel disposed to give to its adoption."

The *Spectator* in 1860 said: "Female violinists are rare, the violin being, we do not know why, deemed an unfeminine instrument." In 1869 *The Athenæum*, noticing the performance of some lady violinists, said: "The fair sex are gradually encroaching on all man's privileges!" Man's privileges! What would that critic say now? Violin-playing by ladies made slow progress in England, even after the wonderful achievements of Mme. Neruda (later Lady Hallé) gave

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it such a splendid impetus. For instance, the first lady student of the instrument entered at the R.A.M. in 1872. Now the lady violinists at the Academy must be nearly a hundred.

And why not? Sevcik, the famous violin teacher, was asked recently whether in his experience men or women made the best pupils. And this was his answer:

"Girls don't drink too much or smoke inordinately, therefore they keep their bodies in better condition. Besides, look what patience women have compared to men! Perhaps at first a woman does not put as much expression and feeling into her playing as a man, but wait till she falls in love! Then the soul comes. However, some remain as cold as ice for ever. Men, too, have often no idea of feeling, and imagine that if they put on a tremolo that they have done all that is necessary. Kubelik lacked expression at first, but it came to him as he grew older."

It may be added that some leading lady singers, notably Christine Nilsson and Marcella Sembrich, have been good fiddlers.

Among living lady violinists, Marie Hall takes the first place. Her history has been quite romantic. She said once: "I am really sick to death of all that has been written about my youth and its vicissitudes." But the way in which she triumphed over these vicissitudes is entirely honourable, and ought to be recorded for the encouragement of others.

Born at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1884, she received her first lessons from her father, a harpist in the orchestra of the Carl Rosa Company. When she was ten she had a year's tuition from Sir Edward Elgar—a very interesting connection, surely! Subsequently she studied for three years with Max Mossel at Birmingham, making several appearances meanwhile as an infant prodigy. The struggle was severe at this time owing to her father's lack of means; and she was reduced to playing ephemeral music in saloons and sometimes on the pavement's edge.

In 1899 she gained one of the recently-instituted Wessely Exhibitions at the R.A.M., but was unable, through poverty, to take it up. The story goes that a little later a clergyman, an enthusiastic lover of music, found her in a half-starved condition playing for coppers in the streets of Bristol. Recognising a talent beyond the ordinary, he took her to London, and with the assistance of some friends—among them the late Mr. Hill of Bond Street—placed her in a position to continue her studies with Professor Johann Kruse. After she had made steady progress with him for a year and more, her friends again came forward, and sent her, armed with a letter of introduction from Kubelik, to Professor Sevcik at Prague. The rule at the Prague Conservatoire is that every pupil who enters must take the entire six years' course before leaving; but Anton Dvorák, at that time chief director of

studies, was so impressed with her playing that for the first and last time he allowed the regulation to be broken, and the first five years to be taken as fiddled. Hard work is the initial demand that Sevcik makes on his pupils, and it was a demand which Marie Hall was fully prepared to meet. During her year at the conservatoire, and her extra five months of private study with him, she practised eight hours a day at least, and oftener ten.

And yet Joachim had refused her because, as he alleged, she played out of tune!

Sevcik was so delighted with his pupil that he lent her his own Amati violin for her *début*. This was made at Prague in 1902. The lady's success was enormous and instantaneous. When she appeared in London in 1903 she created a great sensation, and since then her brilliant career has proceeded on the usual virtuoso lines.

Marie Hall has been everywhere in the course of her tours. Her account of the Americans is very complimentary, but she has an amusing word to add about the New Yorkers. "The 1812 Overture of Tschaïkowsky appeals to them," she says. "They like something big, with plenty of sound. It seems more for their money." At private parties in the States she has had sometimes to shake hands with 500 people. In Australia she was literally smothered with flowers. Harps and lyres, shepherds' crooks, and bouquets were showered on her after her concerts.

An interviewer said to her once: "Will you tell me the most extraordinary experience you have had?" And this was her reply:

"I think the one that appealed to me most was a concert I gave at Suva, the capital of the Fiji Islands. Our boat put in there for a few days to take in some cargo, and a concert was hastily arranged. There are about 1100 white people there, and I think they all went—in fact, it was a sort of universal holiday. I went to the only draper's shop there to see if I could get a cotton dress, as mine were packed away, and they explained to me that they could not let me have one that day as they were all going to a concert, and expressed much astonishment that I was apparently not going too. When I explained that I was going, and wanted a dress for that reason, that changed matters entirely, and they all set to work and fitted me out with something which answered the purpose. Suva does not boast a concert hall, so the concert was held in a sort of large tent, and the heat was something terrific; I had to have a man to keep an electric fan moving right over my hands, or I could not have played at all. The piano was a very old one and fearfully out of tune, but at last we found an old sailor from a warship who volunteered to tune it. He was very deaf, and had his own ideas about tuning, and he informed me with great pride that as a piano always sounded more brilliant if the upper notes were a little sharp he had tuned up the treble. He had really done so, with the result that for about an octave and a half in the treble the notes ascended in varying degrees of sharpness. The Gover-

nor and his wife were to be present, and someone was wanted to play "God Save the King" at the beginning, so the small daughter of one of the residents was pressed into service. She not only played "God Save the King," but about twenty variations as well, during which the audience had to stand. I am pleased to say the concert was a great success, and we wound up the festivities by a dinner at the Governor's house. I also played at Honolulu, in the Hawaian Islands, and Miss Alice Roosevelt, or rather Mrs. Longworth, was staying there with her husband, and very kindly came to hear me. Another concert I gave was at Vancouver, but as we were only to be there for a few hours I had to go straight off the boat, and was on the platform within ten minutes of our landing. When I got back to England—after being away eight months—I was booked to play at a concert at New Brighton the day after my arrival, and had to be up early the morning after we landed to attend a rehearsal with the orchestra."

Marie Hall, like all other artists of fine expression, is nervous when playing in public. "I have been very nervous on many occasions," she said a year or two ago. And then she continued:

"I remember when Sevcik sent me to play in Vienna while I was still at Prague, how miserable I felt. It was only the fact that I felt I simply must do my best to prove my appreciation of all my master's trouble that made me able to get through at all. Again at my *début* in London in February 1903 I felt so much alone and quite wretched. Mr. Henry J. Wood was a tower of

strength and so kind to me, and all through that evening I felt as though Sevcik were present in the hall, and I forgot all about my fears and the audience, and just played to him. I may say that never in all my career have I enjoyed a concert as much as that (to me) memorable one. The only remedy I know for nervousness is to be able to concentrate one's attention wholly on the music. By so doing all thoughts of self vanish, and one becomes lost to everything but the beauty of the music."

She has interesting ideas about her profession, this fiddler of the frail physique. She thinks nineteen quite young enough for a violinist to "come out." She says it is much better to wait until one's education is finished, though finished is merely a convenient term, for "there is always something more to learn." But certainly, she adds, "one is more fitted to appear before the public at nineteen than at twelve. I believe in gaining a certain amount of experience before playing in London or any other big town, and a hint that may be worth having is to try always to play before the concert in the hall in which you are to perform so that you may get some idea of its acoustic properties. Another thing I should like to say is that violinists should not neglect any opportunity of hearing the best music, and not only other violinists, but music of every kind, pianists, singers, orchestral and chamber music."

She says that violin-playing of the virtuoso sort is hard work, but she does not find it trying, because she

loves it so much. She enjoys practising, and never allows anything to interfere with it. "I have practised," she says, "in the train, on the steamer, and in all sorts of odd places when travelling, and I am not happy if I cannot get in about six hours a day. During my spare time at home (when I have any) I love to play chamber music, and have been revelling lately in quartets. I think every violinist ought to acquire a knowledge of chamber music, for, besides being most enjoyable, it affords such a splendid training."

She plays on the famous "Viotti" Stradivarius. "It is a great treasure," she says, "and it seems so wonderful to think that is over 200 years old, and is yet as beautiful as ever." In 1911 Miss Hall was married to Mr. Edward Baring, of the firm of concert-directors, Messrs. Baring Brothers, of Cheltenham. Mr. Baring had been her business manager.

CHAP. XXX. MISCHA ELMAN

MISCHA ELMAN IS NOW TWENTY-TWO—only twenty-two!—having been born in 1892, the son of a Jewish schoolmaster in Southern Russia. He took to the fiddle as ducks take to water, and when he was only five he played at a village concert. Somewhat later, he played at a reception at a Russian prince's. "For an urchin of seven," he says, "I flatter myself I rattled off Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata finely. This sonata, you know, has in it several long and impressive rests. Well, in one of these rests, a motherly old lady leant forward, patted my shoulder, and said, 'Play something you know, dear.'"

The boy's father recognised him as a genius, but unhappily there were money difficulties about having him properly trained. It is averred that when Mischa was taken by the parent to a professor, for the first time, he was told to say that he was five years old and had been learning the violin for three months. He got confused, and said that he was three months old and had been learning the violin for five years!

Somehow the money difficulties were surmounted, and Mischa obtained admission to the Imperial School of Music at Odessa. He made rapid progress there, and attracted the notice of such eminent artists as Sarasate, Brodsky, and Auer. Auer especially interested himself in the boy. In the course of a professional tour in South Russia he had heard him play, and was so struck with his wonderful talent that he

Photograph by Elliott & Fry Ltd.

MISCHA ELMAN

agreed to take him as a pupil if he could obtain the permission of the Czar for Mischa and his family to reside in St. Petersburg, as no Jew born outside the city was allowed to live either in the capital or in Moscow.

The requisite permission was obtained by Auer (then head of the violin classes at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire), but not without difficulty. "If you won't let me have the best pupil ever offered to me," said Auer to the authorities, "I will resign my appointment." Permission was then given for the boy alone to remain at St. Petersburg, but Auer would not agree to this. "The father will help me to *make* the boy," he said. In the end Auer accepted him as a free pupil, and the Elman family removed to St. Petersburg.

In October 1904 a violinist prodigy came to St. Petersburg who at that time had made a great stir in the world. To Professor Auer the critics said, "Have you ever heard anything like this before?" "Yes," he replied, "I have a pupil in my class who can play this boy's head off." "Why then, do you not produce him?" they inquired; "it is easy enough to make such a statement, but let us hear him." Arrangements were accordingly made for Mischa to appear at the Deutscher Liedertafel, the most important musical society in St. Petersburg. Now, it had always been the prerogative of Auer to play at this, the opening meeting of the season. On this occasion, however,

he sent a message saying that he was too unwell to play. The president, in a little speech, regretted the reason of Professor Auer's inability to play, but announced that he had sent his youngest pupil who he felt had the right, by reason of his ability, to take his place. After referring to the service which Auer had rendered to the society, the president went on to say that the distinguished professor was present as a listener, adding that he (the president) rejoiced that the king and his successor had met, for it was not often given to crowned heads to witness the coronation of their successors! Great was the astonishment, not to say amusement, of the audience when a little fellow of thirteen appeared as Auer's substitute! Mischa played the Mendelssohn Concerto (with pianoforte accompaniment), one of Chopin's Nocturnes, and Paganini's "Moto Perpetuo," and with such success that the little fiddler was then and there engaged by a German concert agent, who was present, to play in Berlin.

This was in 1904. The Berlin *début* was particularly interesting, since it took place on the night after Von Vecsey's appearance there. Says one:

"Though the little Russian's programme was somewhat light as compared with that of his Hungarian rival, it showed off Elman's marvellous technique which reached its height in Sarasate's 'Zapateado,' a Spanish dance. His interpretation of Paganini's Violin Concerto in D exhibited his extraordinary power and

depth, while he astounded his audience with his brilliancy of attack. For an encore Elman gave the famous Nocturne of Chopin, which brought out his wonderful verve and rhythmical daintiness and feeling."

In 1905 the boy came to London and played at one of Mr. Charles Williams' orchestral concerts, for a fee of 120 guineas—the largest fee hitherto known for an instrumental performer's first appearance in the metropolis. A recent writer says he can recall "the extraordinary sensation occasioned by the sturdy little boy in the sailor suit when, after coming on the platform, grave and self-possessed, and making his stiff little bow, he attacked the opening phrases of the Tschaïkowsky Concerto. His head, as he stood, was on a level with that of the seated leader of the orchestra; his playing in every respect, in tone, technique, artistic feeling, and most amazing of all, in intellectual grasp, was that of a full-grown man. We had all heard other prodigies play what they had been taught, and play it wonderfully enough; but here was one who had evidently felt and thought out every bar for himself. Genuine emotion, fiery and tender by turns, was there, and behind it all a busy watchful brain. The audience was captured at once, the critics did their duty next day, and succeeding appearances confirmed and strengthened the first impression."

Having conquered London, Mischa achieved his next success in Paris. He played at a Colonne concert,

when an interesting incident connected with his St. Petersburg period would be recalled.

M. Colonne conducted an important orchestral concert in the Russian capital in 1904, at which Mischa, anxious to play in public with the orchestra, offered to play without fee. This was agreed to. But when at the rehearsal M. Colonne called for the soloist and a small boy appeared carrying his violin, the great French conductor exclaimed in tones of indignant astonishment, "What! this is an insult to me. I have conducted for the greatest artists, but never before have I received such an insult." M. Colonne was urged to hear the boy. "Hear him," he replied; "no, I will not: he must play with pianoforte accompaniment only." When at night the concert took place, and after Mischa had played Wieniawski's "Faust" fantasia, M. Colonne, himself a violinist, made his way to the platform and said to the boy, "I owe you an apology; I should have considered it an honour to have conducted the orchestra with such a player. My orchestra in Paris is at your disposal, and I will give you a fee never before known there." And so Colonne fulfilled his promise.

Elman was again in London in 1906, when he gave a series of recitals at Queen's Hall. He became so much the rage then that he could command 200 guineas for playing at a private party. He limited himself to five of these functions a week—£1000! And then,

besides, there were his concerts. Since that time his career has been a series of triumphs. His technique is immense; but mere virtuosity has never tempted him aside, and he is as ready to trifle elegantly with Saint-Saëns' Rondo Capriccioso and other light pieces as to address himself to the most serious thing ever written for the violin—the Brahms' Concerto. And with it all, his manner remains as simple and quiet as ever. His people now permanently reside in London, and Mischa lives very quietly and simply with them, his only hobby being motoring. He plays on a fine Amati violin.

XXXI. JACQUES THIBAUD

JACQUES THIBAUD IS THE MOST REPRESENTATIVE violinist of the French school of to-day. He is a Parisian to the finger-tips, and is much beloved by his compatriots. Indeed, if one mentions violinists in Paris, the three names most readily spoken of are Ysaye, Kreisler, and Thibaud—a trio of staunch friends, and the joint idols of the musical public.

The son of a well-known violinist and teacher in Bordeaux, Jacques Thibaud had all the advantages of living in a thoroughly musical atmosphere, and the excellent tuition he received from his father enabled him to enter the Paris Conservatoire at the age of fourteen. There, after two years in Marsick's class, he carried off the first prize. After that, he accepted small engagements of all sorts, and then his golden chance came when he joined the Colonne orchestra.

The leader of the orchestra was taken ill, and Thibaud was asked to fill his place. One of the items on the programme was Saint-Saëns' Prelude to "The Deluge," which contains a very fine solo for the first violin. To this the young artist did such justice that he was immediately engaged as soloist for the next concert. From that time his position was assured. By and bye his engagements became so numerous that he had to give up his connection with the Colonne orchestra. Since then he has made himself a welcome visitor in Germany, Holland, Belgium, Russia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and, as we know, in England.

Ysaye was one of the first to recognise his exceptional gifts, and the Belgian artist is still one of his greatest admirers. In 1910, at a dinner in London, Ysaye voiced his opinion thus briefly but pointedly: "There are two violinists from whom I never fail to learn something whenever I hear them play, and they are Kreisler and Thibaud."

Thibaud is assuredly among the great violinists. He has not yet had time to make such a name as Joachim or Sarasate made. Necessarily, he falls into place in public estimation beside M. Ysaye, who may now be reckoned as the doyen of European violin players. But in brilliance of execution, in strength and purity of tone, and poetic and sentimental range, and in a certain Gallic responsiveness to mood and style, M. Thibaud, in the opinion of many, has nothing to learn from any one of his great compeers. His quality of tone, his *finesse* of touch, the absolute certainty of his stroke and pressure when special effects are to be obtained, are marvellous. His playing owes much of its charm to a delightful warmth and spontaneity. The tone is beautifully ripe and mellow, and the style easy, graceful, and devoid of mannerism. Works like the B minor Concerto and "Havainaise" of Saint-Saëns he plays with an almost Oriental wealth of colour, and yet he can bring out all the charm and delicacy of a Mozart Concerto. His readings of Bach are splendidly broad and sonorous. He is an

artist who makes a strong appeal to his fellow musicians, and they never miss hearing him if they can help it.

The point is often debated whether physical exercises interfere with violin-playing. M. Thibaud is a great "hand" at tennis, which, with billiards, forms his favourite recreation. He was very proud when he carried off the championship in the tennis tournament at Villers in 1910. Contrary to the general idea, he does not find tennis interfere with his playing.

Thibaud is the fortunate possessor of a fine Stradivarius violin, dated 1709, a well-preserved instrument with a lovely tone.

CHAPTER XXXII. KREISLER

FRITZ KREISLER IS PERHAPS THE MOST eclectic violinist before the public to-day. He can play airy trifles with infinite grace and charm as well as vivacity; Beethoven with profound depth, breadth, and virility; Bach with solemn detachment; Mendelssohn with right sweetness, sentiment, and power. It is seldom that an artist can master to perfection music so different in character.

Kreisler, although possessing individuality of style and tone, is the most impersonal of violinists. Royalty has honoured him on many occasions. Yet, strange to say, he is not a "vogue." A London journal said recently that if he were to look odd, quarrel with his relatives, or get into a railway accident, he would win the recognition which is his due. Still, he has enough reputation and to spare.

Kreisler was born in Vienna in 1875, the son of a leading physician. He cannot remember a time when he did not possess a fiddle of some sort, but he says he detested practising and would have preferred to be anything else than a violinist. He adopted all sorts of subterfuges to escape from practice. But fate was too much for him. He entered the Vienna Conservatoire, and when only ten took the first prize and gold medal there. Then he went to Paris, and still more astonished his friends by carrying off the much-coveted Prix de Rome at the conservatoire. For he was only twelve at the time, and the premier Prix de Paris had never been gained by one so young.

The Prix meant, of course, four years' study in Italy. After that, he returned to Paris; then toured America with Rosenthal, the pianist. He had to come back for his military service, and in fact became an officer in the Austrian cavalry. He is still in the reserve and therefore liable, in case of mobilisation, to be called back to his regiment of Uhlans. One paragraphist, stating this, added that "were he permitted to ride to the front armed with his violin he would no doubt do more than many batteries and army corps to restore the concord of Europe." There is a picturesqueness about the suggestion which strikes us as very pleasing. No less do we admire the final assurance that "happily Kreisler has not yet been called upon to lay aside the fiddle for the sword." Nevertheless, his patriotism has cost him a good deal in the cancellation of professional engagements.

Freed from his active military duties, he devoted himself with real zest to his musical studies. Fame was slow in coming to him. Speaking in 1908, he said: "I am thirty-three now, and from the age of twenty to twenty-seven I struggled hard for recognition. Though I played every bit as well then as I do to-day, people did not understand it." By and bye, however, he appeared at Berlin (where he resides permanently) with eminent success. Then he went to America again, and made a London *début* in 1901. Since that time he has been a welcome and frequent visitor to England, and

has been heard at many of the great festivals and at leading orchestral concerts. In 1904 he was presented at a London Philharmonic Concert with that society's gold medal.

Kreisler was married in 1901 to Miss H. Lies, an American lady, to whom he acknowledges much indebtedness in his art. Frau Kreisler is "a woman of vast intelligence and insight, besides having a natural critical faculty which is rare, and her husband says that she is his severest critic." He has no faddy views of violin playing. He does not even put in the phenomenal bouts of practice with which some virtuosi are credited. He says that if one practises strenuously when young, the fingers should retain their suppleness later, and that the idea of being compelled to practise several hours daily is the result of self-hypnotism, which really does create the necessity. He is a thorough lover of sport and all manly exercises; a keen motorist, and passionately fond of country life. In fact he says he would like to live in the country and relinquish part at least of the arduous existence of a touring violinist. He has a very exalted conception of his art, and feels that he cannot do himself full justice when travelling, rehearsing, and playing to order, as it were.

It may be added that he plays upon one of the most valuable Cremona violins in existence—a Josef Guarnerius of 1737, which he bought from Mr. George Hart,

the London dealer. He says: "One day as I entered the rooms of Mr. Hart I heard a voice, liquid, pure, penetrating, which filled my soul with longing and made me determined to possess such a treasure at any cost. There were difficulties in the way, as Mr. Hart had already parted with it to a collector, and it was only after long and earnest persuasion, in which Mr. Hart joined, that I was enabled to buy it for £2000." The case alone of this superb instrument is said to be worth £200. Some years before, Kreisler had bought a "Strad" for £800. More lately he has acquired another beautiful "Strad," but he still prefers the Guarnerius.

XXXIII. WILLY BURMESTER

IT IS NEARLY TWENTY YEARS AGO SINCE they dubbed Burmester "Paganini redivivus." That epithet, said one writer at the time, "has been hurled quite indiscriminately at the heads of nearly all new violinists, but it seems for once in a way to have found an object to which it can with justice be applied." Certainly! Paganini was the demon fiddler of all recorded musical history. His feats of technique were so marvellous that many people ascribed them to a supernatural agency.

Well, when Burmester appeared in England in 1895, this was written of him:

"Recently there has come among us a phenomenon, a human phenomenon, who not only has played, but played *in public*—a distinction with a very great difference!—the most difficult music composed by Paganini. And again, not only has he played it, but in a number of cases he has added technical difficulties of a kind that has no equal in violin literature. It is safe to say that no half-dozen violinists the whole world over, even in this age of violinists, could be found to rival with any hope of even approximate success the effect produced by Willy Burmester."

"Are we not, then, justified," adds the writer, "in regarding this phenomenon, Willy Burmester, as the greatest technical violin-prestidigitator whom the world has ever seen, for before him Paganini was by common consent the occupant of this post."

In all this there is perhaps a little of exaggeration. One reads in 1895: "It may be said without fear of contradiction that no new violinist has created so profound an impression in London in recent years. Like Cæsar, Burmester came, saw, and conquered." As a matter of fact, his magnificent accomplishments, fully recognised on the Continent, have never been appreciated at their real worth in England.

Burmester was born at Hamburg in 1869. He got his first fiddle off a Christmas tree when he was four, and next year he began to study in earnest. His father took him to Joachim, who at once admitted him to the Berlin Hochschule, of which he was head. He studied for four years with Joachim, but somehow was refused a certificate on leaving. This seems inexplainable, for it is stated that he had worn down the end of his first finger to the nerve, and had to have several operations in consequence.

Embittered by Berlin, he went to Helsingfors, in Finland, where for three years he supported himself by a modest appointment, and practised nine or ten hours every day. Then, in 1894, he went to Berlin again, and gave a recital. "Mr. Burmester comes from an obscure town unheralded," said one of the papers, "and in the face of indifference, prejudice, and jealousy conquered the metropolis off-hand. For nearly half-an-hour recall followed recall." Next season he was in London and in America. In London his suc-

cess was attributed to Joachim, and in view of what had happened, he was very much annoyed. Of course, Joachim had laid the foundation, but it was surely the solitude and hard work at Helsingfors that brought that "marvellous almost diabolical" technique.

XXXIV. CESAR THOMSON

CESAR THOMSON PRESENTS A PROBLEM.

He is one of the biggest technicians of the violin now living, and yet there are others of far less skill who outshine him in popular favour. It is the old question of personal magnetism, apparently. An artist must be "interesting," and Thomson fails in that one particular.

He is a native of Liége, where he was born in 1857. He got his first music lessons from his father, who was a violinist. Subsequently, he entered the local conservatoire, completed the full course there before he was twelve, and carried off the highest prize attainable. Later on, he studied under such giants as Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski, and Massart.

When quite young he travelled in Italy and Spain, where he scored tremendous successes. Afterwards he appeared in the great art centres of Europe, and created such a sensation as had not then been known since the days of Paganini. In 1879, after having put in four years as solo violinist in the private orchestra of an Italian nobleman, he was appointed *concert meister* of the Bilse orchestra at Berlin; and his success at the Brussels musical festival, three years later, induced the King to appoint him professor of violin at his old conservatoire in Liége.

Most of his touring has been done since that date, and though not exactly popular, he has gained an immense reputation in musical Europe. He positively dazzles by his marvellous technique and astonishing

tours de force. "He can play the most terrific passages," says one, "without sacrificing his tone or clearness of phrasing, and his octave playing almost equals that of Paganini himself." One of his feats is the performance of Paganini's "Moto Perpetuo" in octaves. But after all, he is a player for the musically cultivated rather than for the multitude.

Some years ago (in 1895, to be precise) Thomson told an American interviewer that he believed the days of the virtuoso to be numbered. All the intelligence, energy, and genius of the modern composer, he said, are bent upon orchestral work, or work in which the orchestra predominates or largely participates. The prediction does not seem like coming true yet awhile.

In 1897 Thomson left Liége, owing, it was understood, to disagreement at the conservatoire. He made his home in Brussels, and is now a professor at the conservatoire there. His compositions, numerous and not unimportant, include Scandinavian works, also a Fantasie for violin and orchestra on Hungarian themes, besides arrangements of the old Italian masters, &c. At the moment of this writing he is announced as completing a valuable *Violin Method.*

CHAPTER XXXV. JEAN GERARDY

TOWARDS THE CLOSE OF 1890 AMATEURS were invited to St. James' Hall, London, to listen to a new 'cellist, a lad not then quite in his teens. His name was Jean Gerardy. It so happened that the keen interest which had for a year or two been taken in the displays of musical prodigies had become slackened. Indeed many whose professional duties necessitated their presence entered the hall in a mood resembling that of persons doing an act of penance. They were weary of the exhibition of precocious children, whom they would fain have banished to the class-room of the music-school for a few seasons.

It was to auditors in this frame of mind that Jean Gerardy had to make his first appeal for England's approval. Nothing was known of him or of his family, so that there could be no predisposition in his favour. But before he had begun to play, the appearance of the boy aroused interest. Though self-possessed, there was modesty in his demeanour.

Taking up a position behind his 'cello, he at once showed mastery over the instrument that seemed too unwieldy for his apparently feeble hands. The first piece down in the programme for him was Goltermann's Concerto in A minor, in the performance of which he excited the astonishment of the audience by the richness and purity of his tone, the beauty of his phrasing, and above all by the just and fervent expression of the varied themes undergoing interpretation. These qual-

ities were further revealed in Max Bruch's "Kol Nidrei," Servais' fantasia, "Le Désir," Popper's "Tarantella," and other well-chosen pieces. Since that memorable afternoon in the December of 1890 Jean Gerardy has been growing in stature as well as in knowledge, while his fame has ever been advancing over the world of art.

Gerardy was born in 1878 at Liége, where his father was a professor at the conservatoire. Thus he had the right "atmosphere" from the outset. He began to study the 'cello when only seven, and at ten had graduated at the Verviers Conservatoire. He made a first public appearance in his native town in 1888, and immediately after was being acclaimed in other Belgian towns with the greatest enthusiasm. A memorable incident in his career was when he took part, at a large charity concert at Austrudel, in a trio, the other members of which were Paderewski and Ysaye.

When only thirteen Gerardy was engaged to play with the Viennese Philharmonic Orchestra, then under the direction of Richter; and subsequently he made a deep impression by a tour in Germany. At twenty-five he had already a career which many artists are only beginning at a longer age. He has travelled all over Europe, America, Australia; everywhere received with favour.

He narrowly escaped the San Francisco earthquake. He had been playing in the doomed city, and had ar-

ranged to leave by the morning Pullman, but at the last moment decided to travel by the night train, just succeeding in booking the last berth. A few months before, he was in the terrible railway accident to the Montreal and New York express, and although twenty-five were killed and many badly injured, he escaped with a slight shaking. In 1902 he was said to have lost £1500 by his recitals at Sydney and Melbourne. But he gained a wife—Miss Amelia M'Quade, who is herself a good musician.

XXXVI. PABLO DE CASALS

THIS INCOMPARABLE 'CELLIST MADE HIS *début* in England at the Crystal Palace in 1898, yet it is only in recent years that he has become famous. His father was organist at a village near Barcelona, so that as a boy he had all the advantages of living in a world of music. He got very little formal instruction, though he devoted himself successively to flute, violin, and piano, and sang in his father's church choir. He was thirteen when he decided to learn the 'cello; and in two years from his first lesson he took the premier prize at the Barcelona Conservatoire, in the face of strong competition.

This achievement brought him under the notice of a leading statesman, who had him presented to Queen Christina; and with such assistance a fund was raised to enable him to go to Madrid for two years. It was then decided that he should be sent to Brussels; but when he arrived there, the director of the conservatoire, M. Gevaert, advised him that he would better consult his own interests by going to Paris. Casals accordingly went to Paris, but he offended his friends by so doing, and they withdrew their financial support. Being thus left without means in the French capital, he came home and accepted a post as professor at the Barcelona Conservatoire.

Presently his friends relented, and he went once more to Paris. He carried an introduction to Lamoureux, the eminent conductor, with whom he obtained

an interview. Lamoureux, who was used to being importuned by impossible people, was ill and in bad temper; and he remained at his desk writing during Casals' performance, seemingly ignoring the whole affair. Casals was therefore greatly surprised when, instead of snubbing him, Lamoureux offered him an engagement to play at the next concert. When the time came, Casals was received with such wild enthusiasm that a repeat engagement was at once arranged. The same success attended him throughout the many tours which resulted, from the north to the south of Europe, and also in the United States and South America.

One of Gerardy's admirers mentions an interesting personal experience as illustrating the lasting effect created by his playing. This admirer was talking to an American gentleman of cultivated musical tastes. Some years ago, he said, he had heard a 'cellist in a small town, and had been so deeply impressed that he wished to hear him again. Unfortunately he could not remember the name. "I am sure you will be able to tell me," he added, "for there can be only one such artist. I have never heard playing like it before nor since." He was told that it must be Casals, who was playing in London the following day, and to the American's delight, this proved true.

Casals' playing is practically unique among 'cellists. Technique, tone, phrasing, style, feeling are all there —and something more: an extraordinary mentality

and magnetism which make for absolute perfection. To hear him play Bach is a revelation. Expounded by such an artist, Bach's works are no longer a mass of dry technicalities, but living music, replete with beauty, and often with a sense of humour. "To be a great artist," says Casals himself, "one must, I believe, seek the truth in simplicity, and think only of the music." And most assuredly that is *his* way.

He is a firm believer in hard work and constant practice. "I give every moment I can to practice," he says. "I envy the fortunate ones who can dispense with it, but, for myself, I cannot." He confesses to always being nervous on the platform, but a perfect technique and a strong will prevent his nervousness from affecting his playing in the very least.

When at home Casals lives in Paris, and during the summer months has a few chosen pupils, for he likes teaching. He is now thirty-six years old. He is utterly unaffected, with a native charm and dignity that have brought him hosts of friends.

CHAPTER XXXVII. HUGO BECKER

HUGO BECKER IS ONE OF THE GREATEST of living 'cellists. Londoners used to know well the combination of Busoni, Ysaye and Becker, which charmed music lovers for many seasons; and there are few civilised countries in which the 'cellist has not toured, not once but many times. He has enjoyed trio-playing with Joachim and Von Bülow and Brahms, and could write an intensely interesting volume of reminiscences if he liked.

Becker was born at Strassburg in 1864, the son of an eminent 'cellist, who founded the Florentine Quartet. "From my earliest years," he says, "I lived in an atmosphere of music and at ten years of age was familiar with all the quartets and trios within my scope of execution. At the age of five I began to play the piano, at seven the violin and alto, and at nine commenced to study the 'cello under my father's tuition. When I was sixteen I went to Dresden to take some lessons from Grützmacher, and also to Brussels, where I was placed under the care of De Swert. From Piatti I received also much valuable instruction, and after devoting myself to remarking the specialities of these celebrated men and making a study of their own compositions, I strove to blend the various 'schools' together and form one for myself."

Becker's first appearance was at the historical Gewandhaus Concerts, in Leipzig, when he was seventeen. After that he toured a great deal with his father,

brother, and sister, all since dead. For two years he was solo 'cellist of the Opera at Frankfort (where he now resides), but had to give up that post to fulfil his military service. "Oh, yes," he says, "I am a German officer, having passed my examination in a cavalry regiment. I enjoyed the year's military training, as I am devoted to sport, and riding is one of my favourite pastimes."

Becker has a great love for sunny Italy, where much of a happy youth was spent. He owns (or did own) a beautiful house at Lake Como, where he passes most of the summer months with his Italian wife and children. He speaks English, French, and Italian with great fluency, and his hobby is pictures. "When I was about fourteen," he says, "I secured a canvas which I conveyed up into an attic and, secretly as I thought, devoted some mornings to the painting of a picture. At the end of this time my father, who had been a silent observer of my doings, told me that I must make a choice between the arts, as I could not hope to pass my life successfully in the worship of both." What the choice was the public know and also the result therefrom.

O

CONDUCTORS

XXXVIII. ABOUT CONDUCTING

CONDUCTING, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT TO-day, is a comparatively modern affair. There were no conductors, expressly so-called, in the days of Bach and Handel, Haydn and Mozart. If there was any "conducting" at all, it was done by the harpsichordist, or by the first violin, with an occasional wave of his bow, just as he felt that it was required. No baton had ever been used in England until Spohr introduced one at a London Philharmonic concert in 1820.

It is worth recalling what Spohr said about the incident. In his autobiography we read:

"It was at that time still the custom that when symphonies and overtures were performed, the pianist had the score before him, not exactly to conduct from it, but only to read after and to play in with the orchestra at pleasure, which, when it was heard, had a very bad effect. The real conductor was the first violin, who gave the *tempi*, and now and then, when the orchestra began to falter, gave the beat with the bow of the violin. So numerous an orchestra, standing so far apart from each other as that of the Philharmonic, could not possibly go exactly together, and in spite of the excellence of the individual members, the *ensemble* was much worse than we are accustomed to in Germany. I had therefore resolved, when my turn came to direct, to make an attempt to remedy this defective system. Fortunately at the morning rehearsal on the day when I was to conduct the concert, Mr. Ries was at the piano, and he readily assented to give up the score to me and to remain wholly excluded from

all participation in the performance. I then took my stand, with the score, at a separate music desk in front of the orchestra, drew my directing baton from my coat pocket and gave the signal to begin. Quite alarmed at such a novel procedure, some of the directors would have protested against it, but when I besought them to grant me at least one trial they became pacified. The symphonies and overtures that were to be rehearsed were well known to me, and in Germany I had already directed at their performance. I, therefore, could not only give the *tempi* in a very decisive manner, but indicated also to the wind instruments and horns all their entries, which ensured to them a confidence such as hitherto they had not known. I also took the liberty, when the execution did not satisfy me, to stop, and in a very polite but earnest manner to remark upon the manner of execution, which remarks Mr. Ries, at my request, interpreted to the orchestra. Incited thereby to more than usual attention, and conducted with certainty by the *visible* manner of giving the time, they played with a spirit and correctness such as, till then, they had never been heard to play. Surprised and inspired by this result, the orchestra, immediately after the first part of the symphony, expressed aloud its united assent to the new mode of conducting, and thereby overruled all further opposition on the part of the directors. The result in the evening was still more brilliant than I could have anticipated. The audience, it is true, were at first startled by the novelty, and were seen whispering together; but when the music began, and the orchestra executed the symphony with unusual power and precision, the

general approbation was shown immediately on the conclusion of the first part by a long-sustained clapping of hands."

Mendelssohn also used a baton a few years later, but it was not until 1833 that British musicians had the courage to leave the piano and take up the stick, though they acknowledged how much better the orchestra went together under a conductor. In that year the *Athenæum*, in the account of the second Philharmonic concert, said: "Sir G. Smart, in the true capacity of a conductor, stood with a baton in his hand, and we never heard the band go better." After the third concert of that season the same paper said: "Bishop conducted with a baton—let us hope, therefore, that the leader's 'occupation's gone.'"

Nikisch says truly that the art of conducting is a modern one, possible only since Beethoven. The conductor of earlier times had no opportunity to develop an individual conception, but the modern conductor must probe deeply into the spirit of a work, and build it up anew. He is a re-creator, and must often depart from the composer's *tempi* and expression. Conductors who do this have existed only since Von Bülow.

In a word, conducting has come to be a real speciality, a very subtle art. Many people imagine that the mere wagging of a stick one way or another cannot make any very appreciable difference to the performers, so long as it marks the time for them cor-

rectly. The only way to fully convince the public of the power the baton possesses would be to have the same piece played by the same orchestra several times in immediate succession, and conducted each time by a different conductor; they would then recognise—though they might still fail to understand the reason—the influence for good (or bad) which he exercises over his forces.

Men who have failed in everything else, it is sometimes said, take to conducting because it is easy and fascinating. As a fact, it requires more study and more natural gifts than almost any other branch of the art, except perhaps composition. Firstly, the conductor must be an all-round thorough musician. Secondly, he must know the scores of all the works he conducts extremely well, and if possible, by heart. Thirdly, he must have a good knowledge of the possibilities and distinguishing features of all the instruments. Fourthly, he must have an accurate ear and a good memory. Fifthly, his beat, besides being clear and decisive, must indicate in an intelligent manner the different effects he wishes produced. Further, he must possess such natural gifts as magnetism, poetic feeling, a strong sense of rhythm, and above all—personality and temperament, or in other words, he must impress orchestra and audience with a sense of his complete mastery, and must have enthusiasm. Picture a rehearsal at ten o'clock in the morning in a bitterly

cold hall half-full of fog. The conductor shows his temperament when he makes half-dead players live and glow with enthusiasm.

It is a striking fact that great composers as a rule have made poor conductors. Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Berlioz were great composers and great conductors, but the combination is rare. Neither Berlioz nor Wagner could play any of the orchestral instruments well. Yet Berlioz was a man of great personal magnetism and a most engaging personality. Wherever he went audiences literally fell at his feet. Wagner was perhaps less magnetic, but enormously capable and always in perfect command of himself; a most important attribute of a good conductor. He is said to have had an "exquisite sense of beauty of tone, nuances of tempo, and precision and proportion of rhythm." His beat was very pronounced, and his control over the men was both imperial and sympathetic. As a conductor Beethoven was wanting entirely in self-command and dignity. Schumann was unsympathetic, nervous, and lacking in clearness of intention. And so on.

Nowadays the conductor is, as a rule, the conductor only. Von Bülow, Levi, Lamoureux, Colonne, Richter, Nikisch, Weingartner, Sir Henry J. Wood—not one wrote or has written anything of importance that is likely to live. Some, like Wagner, could not even play the piano decently! Michael Balling, of the Hallé Orchestra, plays the viola; Richter's instrument

was the horn; Nikisch excels on the violin, but all three are inexpert on the "household orchestra." So it comes back to the assertion that your modern conductor is conductor only. That is *his* part: he simply conducts. The condition is born of modern circumstances. Orchestral scores have become so complicated and over-loaded that the primitive methods above indicated would never work.

Weingartner has something very apt, if also sarcastic, to say in illustration of this. He writes:

"Let us open a number of new scores. After we have impressed on our memory the title, and in many cases the programme, we find as a first common feature —after the pattern of the Nibelungen scores—a special page with a detailed list of the numerous orchestral instruments required and as many as possible to each class; secondly, corresponding to it, a huge number of staves, so that the score looks as if one had to climb up and down a ladder to be able to see all that is going on; thirdly, complicated divisions at every moment of the string quintet; fourthly, one harp *glissando* after another; fifthly, ever so many stopped notes in the horns and trumpets; sixthly, strong and frequently unintermittent use of toneless instruments of percussion, producing mere noise; seventhly, a marked tendency to carry up all instruments into their highest registers, where they no longer give out tone, but a shrill scraping, squeaking, and whistling; and eighthly and finally, the working up of all these clangs into a wild tumult, which admits of no musical articulation

because it is simply an infernal hubbub, in which it does not matter a straw what is played."

This, if somewhat exaggerated—as indeed all satire of the kind must be, if it is to strike home—carries with it a wise word of warning to rising composers.

There are all sorts of conductors. Some years ago an American musical journal, impressed with the antics of certain of the tribe, gave a set of "Counsels for Conductors," amusing enough for reprinting. Here they are:

"Take lessons in swimming and carpet-beating.

"Confine your attention to your toilet—to cuffs, collar, gloves, and back hair; and always bear this in mind, your cuffs and shirt-front cannot be too much displayed.

"Tap vigorously on the desk, and give a prolonged 'Hush!' in all soft passages. It draws the attention of the audience from the music to the conductor.

"At the conclusion of each piece wipe your forehead, whether it needs it or not. Scowl occasionally on the man with the double-bass, and, directly the drummer comes in with *his* part, wave your left hand violently in his direction; it keeps down their vanity.

"If you wear long hair, throw it back by a graceful swing of the head at the end of all difficult passages, for it will remind the audience that all the merit is yours."

More recently Mr. Granville Bantock waxed sarcastic over the same thing. According to the modern

idea, he said, hands, arms, head, nay the whole body of the conductor must be *en evidence* and in thorough order for the gigantic accomplishment of any orchestral work. The conductor "must endeavour, as far as possible, to interpret the dramatic situation by his own actions. For instance, the ride of the Valkyries can only be illustrated by throwing both arms about madly in all directions. Doubtless we shall soon see the conductor provided with a mechanical horse, after the approved round-about fashion, to facilitate his efforts in this direction. The prelude to 'Lohengrin' will provide a new sensation, as, with the aid of a parachute, the conductor will be enabled to descend from the roof of the hall on to the platform, representing thus the descent of the Grail."

Mr. Bantock called attention to the forcible, not to say remarkable elbow-action of both arms as an essential feature of the "new style." He admitted himself unable to afford any explicit information on the point; but suggested that an hour's practice every morning before breakfast with 6-lb. dumb-bells would greatly strengthen the biceps of any ordinary individual, and after a time qualify him for conducting. And then he added: "I have my suspicions that the modern conductor carries a small portable dynamo in his coat-tail pocket for supplying himself with a new store of strength when his natural physical power fails him."

This is all very amusing, but gesticulating conduc-

tors are not a purely twentieth-century product. Conductors have always had to express their individuality —poor as it may have been in some cases. And that individuality has naturally been of various kinds. A man need not have passed much beyond middle life to have witnessed such time-beaters as may answer to some of the following descriptions: The Jullienesque, or picturesque conductor; the drill-sergeant or martinet conductor, who is always worrying his players; the red and fussy conductor who uses his whole body to give an elaborate invitation to the first violins to make an obvious entry, and whose frantic beat to the horns after they have entered proves that he has lost his place in the score; the stodgy conductor, more fit to handle a policeman's than a conductor's baton; the antic-acrobatic or contortionist conductor, who should be screened from public view; and the absent-minded conductor. Concerning one of the last named, it is stated that, when rehearsing the overture to "Zampa," he continued to beat time after the band had played the final chord, "We have finished, sir," the principal violinist ventured to remark. "Finished!" replied the astonished batonist. "Why, I have twelve more bars!"

The demonstrative, gesticulating conductor has been declaimed against often enough, and no doubt to many he is a nuisance and a distraction. Wagner had the right idea when he made his Bayreuth orchestra

(and the conductor) invisible. It is really not necessary to indulge in the capers one gets from certain conductors. Take the greatest of modern conductors, Hans Richter, now retired, as an example. Richter conducted an orchestra of artists; consequently he had only to give them a lead, explain a piece to them, and they followed him. You saw in his case absolute dignity in gesticulation, no exuberance of gesture or anything of that sort. The same, as we shall find, is true of Arthur Nikisch.

Obviously, that is what conductors should aim at—the absolute purity of a rendering, without any humbug. There may be people who think that the more the conductor jumps about and "exerts" himself, the better will be the performance. But the man who arrives at the greatest result with the simplest methods must be the artist. One has known instances where, the simpler the music was, the wilder the conductor became. "I would like to see a little more dignity and restraint, and more usefulness in the conductor," says Sir Edward Elgar. "There is, I know, a great difference in choirs and orchestras. Many of the members are not artists, and in the early stages of training a good deal is required to keep them in order. Nevertheless, I wish that conductors would avoid exaggeration, and study how to get the best results with the least possible exertion, and make the position a little more dignified."

ABOUT CONDUCTING

Of course there are great living conductors who are not quiet, and yet achieve splendid results. They are perfectly sincere. It is no use laying down the law where temperament is the determining factor. As natural is it for one conductor to be demonstrative as it is for another not to be demonstrative. Occasionally there may be some quackery on the part of totally insignificant conductors, but it is well to remember that different natures have different ways of doing things. In any case, when to a thorough technical equipment is added first-rate musicianship, a magnetic personality, ripe experience, and poetic fervour on the part of the conductor—an efficient orchestra being assumed—results approaching perfection may be looked for.

XXXIX. ARTHUR NIKISCH

WRITING IN 1896, A LEIPZIG MUSICIAN SAID of Nikisch: "He has proved himself an extraordinarily gifted conductor, and one who understands how to win the public favour; especially in his character of 'the pale man with the black forelock' does he know how to influence the fair sex and the critics." That is a long time ago, and one fancies that Arthur Nikisch, if he ever really thought of influencing the fair sex by his conducting, has other ends in view now!

Nikisch is one of the most magnetic (the repetition of the word can't be avoided) and perfectly equipped conductors before the public. "I have burned all my compositions, and mean to be known as a conductor only," he wrote a good many years ago. It was a wise decision. His method before the public is full of modesty on the one hand, and extraordinary nervous force on the other. His manner of conducting is characterised by severe self-control, and at the same time his results are far above those achieved by many who employ the wildest gesticulations. He is an interpreter, expounder, commentator, but he lets the instruments, inspired by the men executing his will, make the publication. He invites a *fortissimo* by a wave of his wand, but he does not act the *fortissimo* for the edification of the audience. He uses no music, but he makes no parade of the fact. His gestures are incisive and full of nervous energy, but not sweeping. He keeps his eyes and features for the musicians, and, as

far as possible, also his right hand and arm. His left hand is seldom used, and when he calls it into action it is only for a moment, to hold a wing of his forces in check. He does not obtrude his signs of expression upon the public, though he uses them freely; his men know his intentions before they come before the people. He directs his men, controls and sways them; they are his agents of expression, the vehicles of his emotional proclamation.

Tschaïkowsky recorded a notable estimate of him when speaking of his work at the Leipzig Opera. Thus wrote the composer of the Pathetic Symphony:

"I heard 'Rheingold' and 'Die Meistersinger.' The orchestra of the opera is the same as that of the Gewandhaus, and therefore of the first rank; but, however faultless the orchestral performance appears under the direction of Reinecke, one only gains a true idea of the orchestral perfection which an orchestra can attain under a talented conductor when one hears the difficult and complicated scores of Wagner played under the direction of so wonderful a master of his subject as Herr Nikisch is. His conducting has nothing in common with the effective and in its way inimitable manner of Herr Hans von Bülow. In the same proportion as the latter is full of movement, restless, effective in the sometimes very noticeable manner of his conducting, so is Herr Nikisch quiet, sparing of superfluous movements, and yet so extraordinarily commanding, powerful, and full of self-control. He does not conduct, he yields to some secret charm; himself

one hardly remarks; he does not trouble at all to draw attention to himself, but nevertheless one feels that the entire orchestra is as one instrument in the hands of a remarkable master, and follows his beat entirely and without personal volition. This conductor is small in stature, a very pale young man with splendid poetical eyes, which must really possess some mesmeric power compelling the orchestra, now to thunder like a thousand trumpets before Jericho, then to coo like a dove, and then to make one shudder with breathless mysticism!"

To this may be added the estimate of one of his London Symphony Orchestra players. He says:

"I well remember the first time I played under Herr Nikisch. It was in the midst of a festival preparation. We had been playing for about nine hours per diem for several days, and on this particular day we had been rehearsing all the morning, had given a concert in the afternoon, and were again assembled at 7 P.M. to rehearse for the Nikisch concert! Our one hope was that he would let us off lightly, and reserve all the heavy work for the following morning. When Herr Nikisch appeared and had been introduced to us, he made a graceful speech, and at once started with the Tschaïkowsky Symphony No. 5, in E minor. Before we had been playing five minutes we were deeply interested, and, later, when we came to the big *fortissimos* we not only played like fiends, but we quite forgot we were tired. For my own part I simply boiled over with enthusiasm. I could have jumped up and shouted—as a matter of fact when we reached the end of the first

movement we all did rise from our seats and actually shouted because we could not help it. The weird part of it all was, that we played this symphony through—with scarcely a word of direction from Herr Nikisch—quite differently from our several previous performances of the same work. He simply *looked* at us, often scarcely moving his baton, and we played as those possessed; we made terrific *crescendi*, sudden commas before some great chord, though we had never done this before.

"When Herr Nikisch stops us to make some remark, absolute silence prevails. He speaks in a very quiet, smooth tone of voice; he tells us where we can improve a passage, a phrase; he calls our attention to several points we have not made enough of; but rarely does he ask us to play a passage again—he trusts to our memories. Then, when he has said all that he thinks is necessary concerning the work we have played, he looks at his watch and says: 'What shall we do now? Shall we go on, or shall we have a cigarette?' Marvel of marvels, we call out to him to *go on!* Herr Nikisch charms us by his great modesty; his one aim seems to be to make that which we play more beautiful than ever before. He never thinks of personal aggrandisement, or to show with what ease he can control an enormous orchestra. No, no! He shows us how to attain to the most beautiful and the highest in art, and we endeavour to realise his ideals."

Nikisch is very human with it all, too. Writing himself about conducting, he says: "The conductor's conception is not all; the conductor's real art is displayed

in the way he gives expression to his conception. He must attune and unify the individual conceptions of his bandsmen, and have that absolute control over them which comes from a gift of persuasion, humour, magnetism, the art of putting himself in their place. Each group needs different treatment. The oboe and bassoon players are nervous, and must be petted. Holding the breath causes a flow of blood to the head. The players of big wind instruments and violas are composed and good natured. The clarinet player is sentimental, and so on. The tactics of the conductor culminate in letting each performer think that he is carrying out his own conception, when he is really subjecting himself to the conception of the conductor. A conductor does best with a band that he has known for years, but it is often possible, after a single rehearsal, to establish such a contact that the performance is perfect."

Nikisch says his interpretations change as to details from day to day. The emotional character of the music engrosses him, and he does not know how he communicates his ideas to his men. He never figures out in advance how he is going to play each bar. He treats his players as souls, not as machines. He takes their mood and physical condition into account. If the horn player is in splendid form, he follows the slow time the player has chosen in a solo passage. If the man is nervous and ill, and his breath bad, he lets him

play the passage faster. "The conductor," he says, "must never forget that those under him are human."

Nikisch was born at Szent-Miklos, in Hungary, in 1855, son of the head book-keeper to Prince Liechtenstein. He studied at the Vienna Conservatoire, which he left in 1874 with prizes for composition and violin-playing. For four years he was a violinist in the Imperial Orchestra of Vienna, but in 1878, when only twenty-three, he was chosen by Angelo Neumann as conductor of the Leipzig Stadt-Theatre, in association with Herr Sucher and Herr Seidl. At Leipzig he won a great reputation, which he materially increased when, in 1889, he was appointed conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

On his return to Europe in 1893 he became conductor of the Opera at Budapesth, where he gave special attention to Slavonic music, and was mainly responsible for the successful revival of the operas of Smetana and other national composers. He came first to England in 1895, and immediately attracted the attention of those best qualified to appreciate a first-rate conductor. Since then he has proved himself one of the most dominating of the leading personalities who direct our best orchestral forces. During his visit to London in 1895, he received the greatest honour of his life —the offer to become conductor of the famous Gewandhaus Orchestra at Leipzig, and that post he still retains.

XL. FELIX WEINGARTNER

FELIX WEINGARTNER, DESCRIBED IN RIEmann's Lexicon as "nobleman of Münzberg," was born at Zara, in Dalmatia, in 1863. His father, a native of Vienna, was a director of telegraphs under the Austrian Government. He suffered from a chest complaint, and asked to be appointed to the southernmost station, which was Zara. And so it came about that the future conductor entered the world in the capital of Dalmatia.

The boy began to play the piano at six; and when he was eighteen entered the Leipzig Conservatoire. He won the Mozart prize before leaving in 1883, and was entrusted with the direction of Beethoven's Second Symphony in public. This proved the determining point in his career, as he there and then made up his mind to be a conductor. Liszt interested himself in the young man, and invited him to Weimar, where he met many of the notable pianists whose names have a place in these pages.

In 1884 he entered upon his regular conducting career; and became successively kapellmeister at Leipzig, Königsberg (where Wagner had once been conductor), Prague, Mannheim, and Hamburg. In 1891 he was called to Berlin to conduct the Royal Opera, but exchanged that post three years later for a similar one at the Munich Court Theatre. He did not "hit it" with the Court at Berlin, being accused of modernity and innovation. In pique, he declared he would give up the baton and take to composition, but that has not

happened yet! In 1908 he signed an agreement to stay away from Berlin till 1921. The Court of Appeal confirmed the agreement in 1912; for the Director-General of the Theatres insists upon his rights.

Weingartner made his first appearance in England in May 1898, when he conducted one of the Wagner concerts at Queen's Hall. A musical journal, speaking of him then, said: "He seems a thoroughly sound and sane musician, bent on reproducing the great master's *ipsissima verba*, so to speak, and imbuing them with their fullest beauty and nobility. He inflicts no far-fetched new 'readings' upon us, nor is he a *tempo rubato* faddist when dealing with composers to whom rhythm is everything."

In his booklet on conducting Weingartner deals severely with the *rubato* conductor, and speaks of the desire of some to place themselves in the foreground at the expense of the composer, and to attract the attention of listeners by poses, movements, and gestures. The physical aspect of his own conducting makes it a pleasure to watch him. His movements combine the dignity and calm of Richter, with the quicksilvery alertness and exuberance of Sir Henry J. Wood, and to see him draw a long, slow-time movement *crescendo* out of the orchestra, and lead up to some great climax, is sufficient to explain his influence over his players. He possesses a great amount of personal magnetism, and the moment he raises his baton, orchestra and

audience are captured by the impression of his personality.

One of his orchestra men wrote this of him in 1904:

"When Herr Weingartner takes us through a work at rehearsal we feel that he already knows exactly what he wants, and moreover that he has the power and knack of getting it without any undue fuss or worry; all is calm and peaceful with him at rehearsal. At the performance he is like one hypnotised, and with the power to impart the spell to those playing under his baton; and, while always retaining absolute control, he permits the individual player who for the moment has the more important subject to feel that he can play with ease and comfort. It is always a great pleasure to play under Herr Weingartner's direction."

He has no fads, not even the fad of conducting from memory. "I do not look upon directing by heart as at all necessary," he says. "The performance will be just as good if the leader has his score before him. Of course, in any case he must know the music thoroughly. I have never studied a score with the purpose of learning it by heart, but when the music is sufficicntly stamped upon my memory then I do not take the partitur into the concert. I hold it to be inartistic and absurd to force one's memory. The conductor should be only the true interpreter of the thoughts of the composer. He is to reproduce the picture which the work calls up before him as clearly, as simply, and as perfectly as possible. Anything else is a side issue."

Weingartner is not only a conductor and a composer: he shows a literary activity which is endless. His brochure on conducting is naturally authoritative. Wagner's work bearing the same title forms its starting point. Weingartner, discussing the Wagnerian conductors (he wrote in 1895), frankly distributes praise and blame. His appreciation of Von Bülow is very marked. Under Bülow, he says rightly, "performances often took place which live in the memory unforgotten." After Wagner's death, Bülow would have been the right man as conductor at Bayreuth. So says Weingartner. But he leaves out of consideration that, from personal grounds, during the last years of his life, it was an impossibility for Bülow to take part in the Bayreuth work. For had not Wagner wrecked his domestic happiness and married his divorced wife?

Weingartner's latest volume (1913) is a collection of essays, all very interesting to the general reader. Many varied subjects are treated, and the book is full of wise saws and modern instances. Perhaps the most entertaining of the essays is that dealing with soloists at symphony concerts. Weingartner first describes the expectant attitude of the audience, wondering if the singer is good-looking, whether she will wear a light or dark dress. Her photograph shows her adorned with a pearl necklace. Will she wear it?

An overture is played, and at last, after exciting op-

enings and shuttings of the door to the artists' room, lo, she comes forth leaning on the arm of a white-gloved gentleman. She sings the "undeservedly popular 'Bell' air from 'Lakme,' or Proch's Variations, or if she wishes to be taken for an admirer of the classics, an air of the Queen of Night. If her voice is of heavier timbre, she will choose an aria of Gluck or a song from one of Handel's oratorios. This is certain: we hear something that suits neither what preceded nor what will follow." The orchestral modern composition that comes before the inevitable group of songs is heard. If the composer's name be authoritative, the music will be pronounced beautiful. If the composer is unknown, there will be wise talk about dissonances and reminiscences. Hearts are lighter in either case, for the singer will now appear again. Songs by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms are grouped without care for their character or regard for contrast or sequence. Something lighter at the end, something gushing by Tosti or Chaminade, or something "effective" by Wolff or Strauss, arouses enthusiasm. Da capos, wreaths, bouquets. "And if she sings a 'chanson' or a 'canzonetta' in a foreign language, enthusiasm becomes frenzy."

Thus the cynical Felix. He has a gift of humour, and can tell a good story. On one occasion he proposed to the director of the Dantzig Theatre to give Beethoven's "Fidelio." "Is that another of those trashy things for which one has to pay so much for composer's

rights?" inquired the director. "No," said Weingartner; "for 'Fidelio' there is nothing to pay." Then he turned to go out. The director called him back. "When did the composer of 'Fidelio' die?" he asked. "In 1827." "Very good; then we'll give 'Fidelio.'"

Weingartner has always been rather out-spoken, and recently he expressed a desire to withdraw the things he had uttered against Brahms' music. He says he was prejudiced by the assertions of extreme supporters of Brahms, who talked of the three B's, and linked him with Bach and Beethoven. He now finds Brahms' symphony a welcome relief from the distracting elaboration of modern music, where he often cannot see the music for the scoring. His tendencies are not wholly ultra-modern. "People," he says, "open their eyes with admiration when the name of Mozart is mentioned, but when his works are performed, they stay at home." This is significant.

In England Weingartner is known chiefly as conductor of the Sheffield Chorus, in which appointment he succeeded Dr. Coward. He then confessed that no choral singing in Germany touched the Sheffield singing; and he was so enthusiastic that he signed his name in the albums of all the chorus!

Energy and alertness, says one appreciator, are strong characteristics of this leader of men and poetic-souled musician. His clear-cut features when in repose might convey the impression of a stern nature

beneath that pale face; but no one can laugh more heartily than he, and the smile that now and again brightens his countenance is one that is not easily forgotten. His hobbies—he took a keen delight in adding this word to his limited English vocabulary—are walking and mountain-climbing; "and I love the classics, Beethoven and the rest," he says.

XLI. SIR HENRY J. WOOD

IN MOST PEOPLE'S EYES, SIR HENRY J. Wood's rank is with the very first of living conductors. There are some who violently disapprove of his interpretations of the great classics; some also disapprove of his programmes. But no one can deny his immense vitality, his complete control over his resources, and the great service he has done to music in England by his readiness to secure a hearing of unfamiliar works, and especially of the works of British composers. It is his opinion, emphatically expressed, that our young composers are splendid and better than those of any other nationality.

Sir Henry is one of the best all-round men among British musicians. He has proved himself not only as a conductor, but as a composer of distinction, an organist of ability, and a vocal teacher of unusual success. And all this he has accomplished in a very short time, for he is still a comparatively young man, having been born in London in 1870. His father was a good amateur 'cellist, and for twenty-five years solo tenor at the Church of St. Sepulchre, E.C., while his mother (of Welsh origin) was a charming singer.

Precocious he was, almost like the precocity of Mozart, for when only six he could play pieces by the earlier classical masters. He took to the organ, too, and at seventeen was appointed organist and choirmaster of St. John's, Fulham. The general public first noticed his gifts as an organist from his playing at

several of the exhibitions, beginning with the Fisheries' in 1883, when he was announced as "Master Henry J. Wood."

Sir Henry put in six terms as a student at the R.A.M., where he gained four medals. For a time he thought of devoting himself to composition, but several engagements with choral societies and opera companies proved to him that he would do better to give his attention to conducting. In this character he made his bow to a London audience at the Avenue Theatre, where it was his proud privilege to direct a specimen of that form of art which has since grown so dear to the great heart of the English people—the musical farce. That the course he took showed modesty need not be argued; that it showed wisdom will also be immediately evident to any one who will take the trouble to reflect for five seconds that the business of a director of so small an orchestra as the orchestra employed at the average comic opera is first, and indeed chiefly, to accompany well; and, secondly to get as many pretty effects as possible with very limited means. Now, to accompany really well on the orchestra is one of the hardest things in the world. It presupposes complete command of the band. The musician who—like the conductor at a light operetta or a musical burlesque—must learn to achieve it, is faced at the outset by the necessity of mastering his men. No posturing calculated to awe and deceive the coun-

try cousin, no wild wagglings of the stick that take in no one—not one of the thousand devices under which the non-conductor disguises his lack of skill—is of the slightest avail; the conductor must on the one hand acquire the knack of beating time so that his bandsmen know what he wants, and make them understand that they must do it, and so succeed; or, on the other hand, he learns nothing, and fails.

Mr. Wood gained immensely by his varied experience, and now we have to look upon him as one of our first English conductors, and one of the ablest conductors in Europe. He has not, perhaps, the distinctive individuality of certain other notable conductors, but as an interpreter of the great music he is certainly in the front rank. He forms a very clear idea of the result he wants, and rehearses enthusiastically till he gets it; and if in the heat of playing to an audience he is inspired to modify his previous conception, he has the trick of telling his men by his gestures in what way it is to be modified.

His rehearsals are particularly interesting. Says a writer in the *Musical Times*, to whom I am much indebted here:

"No gifts of insight, no skill in conducting, are of much avail unless they are allied to the power to rehearse scientifically. No one familiar with Sir Henry Wood's methods of work can fail to note that a large measure of his success is due to his extraordinary

punctiliousness at rehearsals and in preparing for them. He leaves nothing to chance, and will constantly spend hours over band parts in order to ensure their correctness in every particular—phrasing, dynamic directions, &c. How often it is that young composers, and even composers who are old enough to know better, upset a rehearsal and the possibility of the success of their work by providing band parts that have to be corrected on the orchestra! A two hours' rehearsal of a full orchestra costs £50—that is, about 8*s.* 6*d.* a minute. A quarter of an hour occupied in correcting and otherwise dallying wastes £6, 5*s.* Wood has 2500 works in his library, every one of which he has personally edited. He has himself scored 125 arias for use at the Promenade Concerts and elsewhere. Modern scoring is frequently too thick for solo singers. Sir Henry says that he bears in mind Phil May's plan of drawing his pictures, in which, after employing say sixty lines, he eliminates forty."

In 1895 Queen's Hall was built, and the young musician was engaged to conduct a series of Promenade Concerts. An opportunity presented itself—a golden one, as it turned out—and there was the man, ready to hand, and with the ability to make the most of it. What he has since accomplished is known to the whole musical world. He has gradually taught the greater public to appreciate and enjoy works which before his time interested only professional musicians and educated amateurs.

The arrangement of the instruments in the Queen's Hall Orchestra is unusual: all the violins (1st and 2nd)

Photograph by Histed, London.

SIR HENRY J. WOOD

are on the left, and the violas take the customary place of the second violins on the right. The wood-wind occupy the centre of the orchestra, the brass and percussion being ranged above them. The 'cellos and basses are all on the right side, near the violas. This arrangement is explained by the desirability of grouping the instruments that generally work together in an ensemble, and, besides, it facilitates the giving of cues and economises time at rehearsals. The underlying justification for any rational disposition of the orchestral forces is that it enables the conductor to control them and the players to work in unity. If there were no conductor to consider, and no desire for perfect ensemble, something might be said for Spontini's suggestion that the string and wind players should mix miscellaneously in order that the tone might blend.

Next to his conducting, it is perhaps as a vocal teacher and trainer that Sir Henry is most successful. The only musical subject on which he gives private instruction is singing. He states that he studied under seventeen teachers of singing, and that from only two, Duvivier and Manuel Garcia, did he derive any real benefit. He says that the vowel "oo," so much used in voice-training, is only fit for dogs and wolves! He is very particular about enunciation. In an address to the chorus of the Sheffield Festival, he once said:

"Now for your greatest fault! Words! Words are your masters! When you go and hear a bad comic

opera in the theatre, and you listen with rapt attention to the principal comedian, what attracts you? 'You are able without effort to hear every word he sings'—therein lies the pleasure. You forget that he has no voice. Now, think, when you are singing choruses at the next festival what a delight to the public it will be if they can hear every word."

No doubt Sir Henry's experience in the department of solo-singing has helped him to secure the *cantabile*—the singing tone and style—that so often characterises his orchestral readings. He makes the complaint, often heard in these times, that solo singers are trained in a lopsided fashion, devoting years to production and "placing," and omitting to make themselves musicians.

It is difficult to believe that a man who takes his professional work so seriously can find time for recreation. Yet Sir Henry has other than musical interests and occupations, the most notable of which is a passion for oil-painting. In his boyhood he showed some capacity in this direction, and his father desired him to become a painter. But music was to triumph. In 1898 Sir Henry married a Russian lady, the Princess Olga Ouronsuff, a finished artist in many types of song and in many languages, who had been one of his singing pupils. Much sympathy was expressed for him when she died in 1909.

XLII. LANDON RONALD

"I AM ONE OF THOSE UNFORTUNATE MEN who work during fifty Sundays out of the fifty-two," said Mr. Landon Ronald recently. "Sometimes I am engaged with rehearsing from ten to one, followed by a concert in the afternoon, and another at night, and entailing practically nine hours' conducting." Fancy waving the baton for nine hours! But Mr. Ronald is a young man, and hard work is like a tonic to him.

He has told us a lot about himself at one time and another. It seems that his ideal as a boy was to be a "funny man," like Grossmith and Corney Grain. From the age of five, however, there was no doubt of his destiny towards music. His mother gave him his first piano lessons, and otherwise guided and fostered his talents. Oddly enough, considering his later strenuous life, he was a lazy boy, and would not practise. When fourteen he wanted to abandon playing and become a conductor, a composer, and a music critic. His mother would not hear of it, and he was kept at his private studies until sent to the R.C.M. He left that institution, while still under seventeen, "as an excellent pianist, a fair violinist, and a composer of some pretty songs, and equipped with a large knowledge of the orchestra and orchestral music through having played first violin in the college orchestra for a considerable period."

It will be best to let himself tell of his first engagement. He says:

"My first engagement followed soon after I left col-

lege, and came about thus. I received a letter from a fellow-student saying that he heard that a pianist was wanted to play the difficult pianoforte part in 'L'Enfant Prodigue,' the musical play without words which was then at the height of its success at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, and would I go to see Mr. Alfred Moul in Sackville Street about it.

"I attended the trial which was to be held next day at the theatre. The composer was there, poor Charles Lauri, Mr. Moul, and about twenty other poor devils of pianists, one worse than another! My turn came, and I played very well a Liszt Rhapsody. My triumph was immediate, and I was at once made to play from sight some of 'L'Enfant Prodigue.' Poor Lauri so completely lost his head that in a loud whisper I heard him tell Moul not to let me go out of the theatre, and to settle with me there and then.

"I had no idea of my value, and scarcely realised what a salary meant. Whatever I got I knew I should have for pocket-money, and before I overheard Lauri's remark I began to see visions of two golden sovereigns per week to spend as I liked! When Moul eventually, however, began talking terms, and got me into a corner by insisting on my stating how much per week I required, without a moment's hesitation I answered 'ten pounds.' What possessed me to do so, or how I had the effrontery, still remains a mystery to me, and when I was offered eight instead of being kicked out of the theatre, I was scarcely able to find my voice to say 'Yes.'"

He played "L'Enfant Prodigue" over 400 times. Then he determined he would be a conductor. But he

was not yet done with the piano. Sir Augustus Harris, indeed, engaged him at Covent Garden Theatre as *maestro del piano*. Afterwards he was sent by Harris on a six months' tour with a company. The tour proved a failure, but it gave the young musician a lot of valuable experience.

Presently he met Mme. Melba, who asked him to study Massenet's "Manon" with her. He studied the vocal score all night, without going to bed, and arrived at Melba's hotel at 10 o'clock next morning, knowing the work practically by heart. The singer became enthusiastic during the rehearsal, and said, as Mr. Ronald left her: "Don't forget that you are Melba's accompanist everywhere." He speaks in glowing terms of Melba's interest in him when he was thus starting out on his career; emphasizing especially her taking him to America to be her accompanist on an extensive tour.

In 1896 and 1897 he conducted English Opera at Drury Lane and Grand Opera at Covent Garden, being probably the only Englishman of twenty-one who has ever done so. In addition, he was much engaged as accompanist to many of the great singers, and was composing songs which, he says, had but a small, if any sale.

On the formation of the London Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Ronald's services became much more in demand for serious concert work, and, after conducting concerts of all kinds for this orchestra, he was invited

to go to Berlin to conduct the famous Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. There he achieved one of the biggest successes ever gained for a foreigner, and never before equalled by a Britisher. The critics were loud in his praise. One of the chief wrote of him that: "He combines the qualities of our greatest conductors, such as Weingartner, Mahler, and Nikisch." Mr. Ronald repeated this exceptional success in Vienna, Leipzig, Amsterdam and Bremen; and in fact wherever he appeared there was nothing but a chorus of extravagant praise, and he was hailed as one of the greatest living conductors.

This reception abroad seemed to have brought things to a head in his own country, and work began to flow in upon him. He soon discovered, however, that to make a personal success it was necessary for him to have an orchestra of his own, and as an exceptionally fine body of instrumentalists called the "New Symphony Orchestra" were seeking a conductor, it was soon arranged that Mr. Ronald should be their man. Since he has assumed this position both he and the orchestra have taken a leading part in the musical life of London, and it is no exaggeration to say that at the present moment this combination has most of the chief work there. They are engaged to appear every Sunday at the Royal Albert Hall, and do a great deal of work on Sunday evenings with the National Sunday League. Besides his work in London, Mr. Ronald is in

great demand in the provinces, and conducts from time to time such organisations as the Scottish Orchestra, the Bradford Permanent Orchestra, &c. For the past six years he has directed a season of Promenade Concerts at Birmingham, and still continues his Blackpool Sunday Symphony Concerts during August and September.

Mr. Ronald strenuously upholds the claim of British composers to a hearing. Moreover, in the interests of the people, he struck for cheaper seats at the New Symphony concerts. He would like to make the cheapest seats sixpence, but the lessors will not allow him to. Cheap prices and no free tickets, is his motto. He thinks that the reason why London concerts are so badly attended is that there are too many free tickets about. A recital to introduce a new artist costs £30 to £60; an orchestral concert four times as much. The receipts, if the concert-giver is unknown, seldom reach £10, the audience getting free tickets. This gets the public into the habit of having free seats, and holding back from the best concerts.

He has an acute sense of absolute pitch, and a phenomenal memory for music. He memorised Elgar's symphony for the occasion of his notable performance of that work with the New Symphony Orchestra at Queen's Hall, and he conducted it practically without score, although the score was placed on the desk to avoid suspicion of pose.

Mr. Ronald does not indulge in much physical exer-

cise in conducting. He gains his control by the firmness of his manner, and the certainty of his beat. In an address delivered recently, he advised the would-be conductor to hear all kinds of conductors, as well as to learn everything worth in music. "Obtain, if possible, permission to be present at rehearsal. Gain experience under any conditions. Rough it at first. Go on tour with comic opera, and get the rough experience of accompanying singers in that way. Then let young conductors be ready when a vacancy occurred at a seaside or inland watering-place. Here they could get their experience in a classical and a popular repertoire. Don't let them attempt to conduct great orchestras in great cities until they could do themselves justice. They *might* fool the public by outward show, but they couldn't fool the orchestra or the real critics. They might begin with Strauss, Debussy, Tschaïkowsky, and even some of Wagner, but let them beware of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms until the very end of all things, and only when they had been years at the game, and when they were sufficient masters of themselves to forget their technique."

According to Mr. Ronald, "What shall we do with our pianists?" is the urgent question of the day. The schools of music, he remarks, do incalculable harm by turning out hundreds of third-rate pianists every year. "Piano-playing is absolutely overdone. We want a school which will refuse to take piano students unless

Photograph by Dover Street Studios

LANDON RONALD

they show unmistakable signs of talent." This is true. Look down the list of some of the most prominent lady pianists now before the public. The list should prove sufficiently long to dampen the ardour of those intending to adopt piano-playing as a profession, and deter them from carrying out their intention. But *will* they? Not likely!

Mr. Ronald was very proud of his appointment to the Principalship of the Guildhall School of Music in 1910—an appointment which some regarded as a backhander for the "Academics," inasmuch as Mr. Ronald does not appear to have passed an examination in music. A few did not hesitate to predict the suicide of a career. But Mr. Ronald believed that in accepting this post he could do a great deal to further the cause of English music. He set out with the aim to create for the Guildhall School a reputation that would command the respect of musicians the world over. "I see no reason," he said at the time, "why the Guildhall School of Music should not equal in excellence the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music. These establishments I hold to be every bit as good as any on the Continent. You have a few illustrious men at the various Continental schools, but masters like Sir Charles Stanford, for composition, at the Royal College, and Tobias Matthay, for piano, at the Royal Academy, in any other country would be considered equally brilliant."

The G.S.M. post is worth £1000 a year. According to all reports, the school has already shown enormous progress during Mr. Ronald's reign.

As a composer of songs, there is perhaps no Englishman better known to-day. But he has also written several works for orchestra: a Birthday Overture, and two of the most successful Ballets ever produced at the Alhambra Theatre. He was several times at Balmoral and Windsor by "command" of Queen Victoria. And he is very complimentary to Queen Alexandra. "Her love of good music," he says, "is as striking as her unequalled charm of manner. Sometimes Her Majesty sends for me to play for her privately, and on such occasions she asks for excerpts from her favourite operas, 'La Bohème' and 'Die Meistersingers.' It is indeed a pleasure to perform to such a listener."

Happy Landon Ronald!

CHAPTER XLIII. SAFONOFF

SAFONOFF IS FAMILIARLY KNOWN AS "the batonless conductor." He uses no baton, and says he finds that this keeps him in closer contact with the orchestra. "I have ten batons," he once remarked, spreading out his fingers. It all came of his forgetfulness to bring his baton to one of his rehearsals. Wishing to lose no time, he began conducting with his hands alone, and succeeded so well that he never again returned to the usual method. He predicts that in a few years there will be no baton conductors.

One is not so sure. M. Safonoff chiefly directs with both hands simultaneously, and two hands must be more difficult for the eye to follow than one stick. It is true that conductors frequently use the left hand, but this is recognised as calling particular attention to expression, while the baton is looked to chiefly for the "beat." Again, the baton gives the beats in each bar distinctly, whereas M. Safonoff principally confines himself to accentuation, stress, marking the rhythm of the phrases, and shadings of tonal strength. This is doubtless sufficient for highly-trained musicians, and it has the great advantage of fixing the player's attention more on what may be termed the living pulse and spirit of the music than on its subdivision into mechanical beats, but one questions if the method would answer with a "scratch" band or a large choral force such as the Handel Festival chorus.

In the south of the great Russian Empire, on the

northern side of the Caucasus, as far as the eye can reach, the steppes of the Tersky district extend into the far distance. They are inhabited by Cossacks, a strong, brave, and spirited Slavonic race, loving their steppes, their homes, their horses, and all kinds of outdoor exercise. They dwell principally in villages, surrounded by vineyards, orchards, and fields which yield an abundant harvest. Living in close companionship with nature, their steppes, a predisposition to fantastic dreams is highly developed in them. Poetry lives in their hearts, and their beautiful songs form convincing proof of their genuine musical nature.

In this country Wassili Safonoff was born in January 1852, in the village of Itshory in the Tersky district. He was the son of a famous Cossack general, and entered the Alexander Lyceum at St. Petersburg, where only sons of aristocratic families are received. There he had the advantage of learning music under Leschetitzky. On leaving the school he continued his musical studies and applied himself to them more seriously. At the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, in 1880, as pupil of the famous pianist Brassin, he won a gold medal, the highest distinction of the institution. From this time Safonoff devoted himself exclusively to music, made concert tours as pianist with his friend Davidoff, the well-known 'cellist, and was teacher of the piano in the St. Petersburg Conservatoire until 1885, when he was offered a professorship at Moscow, where he remained till 1905.

His activity increased every day. He became director of the Conservatoire and of the Imperial Russian Musical Society; conductor of the Symphonic Concerts; and organised an independent choir and orchestra composed of artists and pupils of the Conservatoire. One of his greatest achievements was the building of the new Moscow Conservatoire, which cost about a million roubles, and owes its existence solely to his energy and efforts.

Safonoff is a gifted pianist. But the limits of the piano were too narrow for him: he wanted a larger medium of expression. He began his conductorship by organising orchestral concerts for the masses at low prices in a circus building, which was always overcrowded. His handling of the orchestra was already characterised by a glowing temperament and a high order of musical and artistic intelligence. As conductor of the Symphonic Concerts he further developed his exceptionally high gifts; his style became broader, more clean-cut, and masterly. He is not a successor of any one of his great predecessors; he has his own way of interpreting classical masters and modern composers, and this he does in a manner which commands approval.

In engaging Safonoff as their conductor, in 1906, the New York Philharmonic Society said: "Our need is for a musician who will stand firmly for artistic truth, and who will so vitalise for us the meaning of music

that music will become to us a force in our daily lives." The committee were paying him £4000 a year to get this, and—they got it.

In 1896, during the coronation festivals at Moscow, Safonoff had an opportunity of showing his splendid mastery, intensity, and virility as a conductor; he led a chorus of about 700 singers. Another performance was arranged in the fields, in which 2500 singers, seven military bands, bells on three towers especially erected for the occasion, and thirty-two cannons took part. His vigorous hand held them all in perfect order. On the 100th anniversary of the Russian poet Poushkin's birth in 1898, Ippolitow Ivanoff composed a cantata, to which Safonoff wrote the words. There were again performances by large orchestras and choruses, which achieved such success that Safonoff was obliged to give six encores of the cantata.

Safonoff is well known all over the musical world, for he has conducted in all the leading capitals, and has won for himself the esteem of all good judges. A photograph shows him with his wife and their eight children, all standing in a row.

XLIV. MICHAEL BALLING

IT IS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF THE GIFTS of Michael Balling that he was chosen to succeed Richter as conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester. Soon after his appointment to that post a musical journalist wrote: "He has shown himself a strong man of affairs, and entirely changed the aspect of musical life in Manchester. He has ventured to disturb Manchester's well-known satisfaction with itself in musical matters, and wounded where it had most pride."

The point of this may be found in the report of a speech which Balling made to the guarantors of the Hallé concerts. He said that on the evening before his last concert the whole of the band had been playing at a concert at Newcastle-on-Tyne. They took train immediately after, and reached Manchester at 4.30 A.M. Seven hours later they appeared in the Free Trade Hall for rehearsal so tired that the rehearsal of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony was a failure. They had had one rehearsal before in a hall so small that the players received only a confused impression of the work. There was no combined rehearsal of orchestra and chorus. At the performance the players were so cramped and the lighting was so bad that false and late entries were inevitable, and the performance left much to be desired. Mr. Balling described these conditions as "abominable," and pleaded for more money, so that things might be done on a more ample scale. The guarantors, he held, should subscribe something

each year, as they have only been called upon twice in thirteen years. Thus Mr. Balling has prevailed upon a committee which has long thought it a duty, almost an ideal, to preserve a square balance sheet, to adopt an artistic policy that may involve the society in an estimated loss of £1000 on the season's twenty concerts, and an alteration of its articles of association in consonance with this policy.

Clearly, Mr. Balling has become a power in English musical life. Of all the great conductors dealt with in this section, his fame has been the most recently acquired. It was only when he conducted Mr. Denhof's performances of the "Ring" in Edinburgh and the North of England in 1910 that he became well known here; and it was his popularity on his appearance at Manchester in this connection that virtually assured him succession to Richter, whose personal friend he had long been.

Balling's career is interesting. He has literally risen from the ranks. His people were very poor, and he boasts of it. He was born at Heidingsfeld, near Würzburg, in Bavaria, in 1866, when the battle around Würzburg was raging between the Bavarians and the Prussians. His father was a lithographer in the employ of the Government at £4 per month, and had also a small grocery business, looked after chiefly by his wife. Balling was the youngest of six children, and his father died when he was twelve.

BALLING

He went only to the village school, and was intended first for a shoemaker. "There's nothing like leather," he says humorously, "but I did not feel inclined that way." He had a good voice as a boy, and sang in the Roman Catholic Church which his parents attended. The schoolmaster therefore suggested that he should have a musical training, and he obtained entrance as a free student at the Würzburg Royal School of Music. Here he studied the viola as his chief instrument, and after four years was awarded a viola of the Italian model as a prize from King Ludwig II. As a matter of fact, his first public position was as a viola player in the Mainz Municipal Orchestra.

He worked hard in untimely hours to pass the examinations that would exempt him for two of his three years' military service, and succeeded. He obtained the necessary position that would give him a secure livelihood, as viola player in the Schwerin Court Orchestra. He met Rubinstein, and played his viola sonata with him in public. He met Brahms, and played with him, too; also with Aloys Schmidt, of pedagogic fame.

During his year of military duty work was somewhat severe. One day he was at military exercise at 4 A.M.; rehearsing the viola solo of "Harold in Italy" with the orchestra at 11; back to barracks from 2 till 6; and in evening dress ready to begin the solo with the orchestra at 7.

From Schwerin Balling obtained his first invitation to join the Bayreuth orchestra. He was its youngest member; and when, on no one starting a viola solo in "Tristan," *he* began, Mottl, the conductor, thought so much of his playing that he placed him at the leader's desk. He was asked to play also at Frau Wagner's soirees.

Then came an unexpected episode in his career. He was asked to proceed to New Zealand in place of another musician, ostensibly to found a College of Music. He booked a passage in the ill-fated *Weirrarapa*, but at the request of the Austrian consul, delayed his passage two days. When he got to Auckland, he found the flags at half-mast, and learned that the *Weirrarapa* had gone down with all her three hundred passengers. In the newspapers he read his own name among the list of the dead.

His destination was Nelson, a place of 15,000 inhabitants. On the way thither in the train an amusing incident happened. Two gentlemen in Balling's compartment were fiercely denouncing the British trade in things "made in Germany." Balling listened in silence, but at the next stopping-place procured a slip of white paper in the refreshment room, wrote on it "made in Germany," pinned it in front of his hat, and went back to his seat. There was some fun, explanations ensued, and the three ended by being very good friends.

At Nelson, Balling soon discovered that he was ex-

pected to play piano duets with the wife of a Dr. Johannsen, a Dane; who, finding that he was not a pianist, shelved him entirely. This stung him into his first attempt to learn the piano, and he began his studies with the Prelude to "Tristan." Naturally the studies did not go far!

After two months' stay he ventured, with little knowledge of English, on a public speech in behalf of his projected School of Music, and raised £300 at the first meeting. The money was spent on instruments, which, some of them unknown in the land, aroused great curiosity when displayed in the shop windows. A New Zealander, Miss Dogtail, taught the pianoforte, and played well; Mr. Balling taught all the orchestral instruments and musical history. In his first harmony class there were twenty-three pupils, including a Colonel Branfield, who had been through the Indian Mutiny and was now over seventy years of age, and a little girl of nine years, daughter of Mrs. Houlker, the teacher of singing. Choral societies were soon formed, and military brass-band players were quickly converted into wood-wind players for the orchestra. After two years' work the Music School had 200 pupils, and it still continues to be a prosperous institution.

Before leaving, Balling had some interesting experiences with the Maoris, and was much struck with their aboriginal music. In the forests bordering the Wanganui (the Rhine of New Zealand) the melancholy of

their chants of mourning reminded him of some of the oldest Catholic hymns. At a Court festival he played viola solos for the Maori king, and was presented with a stick deftly carved by means of fish-shells and stones.

Mr. Balling came back to England to conduct the music to "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for Mr. F.R. Benson's company on their tour through England and Scotland. A return, as assistant, to Bayreuth followed in 1896, when the first performance of the "Ring" was given since 1876. Mr. Balling now became on intimate friendly terms with the Wagner family.

He was next appointed chorus-director of the Hamburg Stadt-theatre, and in eight months he prepared ninety different operas, and conducted all music behind the scenes, attending every rehearsal and every performance. This experience very much widened his knowledge. Called upon suddenly to conduct "The Barber of Seville," without preparation, he became obsessed with the idea that he might develop into a conductor. Soon afterwards he was appointed conductor at Lübeck, where he gave the first performance of the "Ring" without cuts.

In this small town he gave thirty-four performances of "The Magic Flute" to packed houses. He was next at Breslau, and then became successor to Mottl at Karlsruhe. Here he had his first experience of orchestral concerts, and gave all the symphonies of Beethoven and Bruckner. At the Lyceum Theatre, Barcelona,

he gave twelve performances of "Die Meistersingers," the first given there. He next conducted a Beethoven Festival in Rome. Then came an invitation to conduct "Tristan" at Bayreuth, and his appointment as conductor of the "Ring," in succession to Richter.

And so his fame has been made—by sheer ability and hard work, and always the favouring opportunity. I heard him speak at a supper given to the Hallé Orchestra in Edinburgh recently, and was much struck by his modesty and his evident artistic earnestness. As a conductor, he knows what he wants and knows how to get it. In Beethoven's Choral Symphony I have seen him shake his fist at the sopranos, demanding more tone from them when they were already singing their loudest. And he got it!

In all his conducting Balling suggests Richter. He is a little more demonstrative in gesture, but the points he makes are the same—lucidity in execution, the rise and fall of the different parts as they come into prominence in the play of the movement, and a general sympathetic view of the work as a whole. There is in his manner, too, an absence of sensationalism that conduces to the enjoyment of those who go to hear good music well played rather than to watch the back of the conductor, and to have "thrills" when his gyrations suggest that he is doing the whole thing himself.

XLV. WILLEM MENGELBERG

THE NAME IS NOT PERHAPS VERY WIDELY familiar, and yet Mengelberg is among the greatest of living conductors. His first appearance in London was at the Strauss Festival in the old St. James' Hall in 1903. The remarkable vitality of his interpretations was then generally commented on, and it was known that Strauss regarded him as one of the finest exponents of his work. Indeed, did not Strauss dedicate his "Ein Heldenleben" to Mengelberg and his Amsterdam Orchestra.

Mr. Alfred Kalisch, writing in the *Musical Times* of July 1912, remarks that it is one of the curiosities of London musical life that while so many dozens of conductors from every civilised country should have visited England, nine years should have elapsed before Mengelberg again came to London, especially as his fame on the Continent grew steadily all the time.

The real reason is scarcely flattering to the national vanity. A great many offers had been made in the interval to him for appearances in England, but the crude, bald fact is that he was receiving so much higher fees everywhere else than those suggested to him by such indigent places as London, Liverpool, and Manchester, that he saw no reason for accepting them. This should be generally known. As a matter of fact, Mengelberg accepted a 1912 engagement in London at something less than half the fee he was wont to receive in certain Continental cities. He came

to conduct the first concert of the Philharmonic centenary season. He conquered London thereby, and he is likely to be a prominent influence in the orchestral music of England for some time to come.

Mengelberg comes of good artistic stock. He was born at Utrecht in 1871. His father is well known as an authority on Gothic architecture and sculpture, and has taken a prominent part in the restoration of Cologne Cathedral. He began his musical education at the Utrecht School of Music, and completed it at the Conservatoire of Cologne. Originally he had meant to be a solo pianist; but in 1892 he was chosen from over eighty candidates as Director of Music at Lucerne.

Three years later, he went to Amsterdam as conductor and director of the Concertgebow, and that position he has occupied since. Six or seven years ago he was chosen for one of the most important appointments in Germany—that of conductor of the Museum Concerts and the St. Cecilia Concerts of Frankfort. He also conducts regularly every year in a good many cities in Germany, and his annual visits to Italy and Russia are eagerly anticipated.

While Mengelberg has naturally a leaning towards the most modern music, he is also a most reverential lover of the great classics, and his Bach performances are regarded as models. It is one of his cherished objects to encourage young composers of all countries. As a conductor, he never tries to attract attention by

eccentricity of manner or personal pose. His manner on the platform is eminently simple and straightforward, and offers few temptations to dealers in flamboyant epithets. The clearness and tremendous decision of his beat impress even the most casual observer; and he inspires his players because all he does is meant to guide them and not to impress the public. He gives his cues in a most unmistakable manner, and wastes neither time nor energy in superfluous movements.

Mengelberg has a very high opinion of English orchestras, and their readiness to respond to the conductor's wishes. "He told his friends," says Mr. Alfred Kalisch, to whom I am specially indebted in this chapter, "that the wonderful flexibility and unanimity of the gigantic orchestra which he faced at the Albert Hall on the occasion of the Orchestral Association's *Titanic* Concert gave him one of the greatest experiences of his life. He freely admits that he approached his task with a certain amount of scepticism, and without any hope that it would yield really artistic results, because his previous experience of very large orchestras with numerous 'passengers' had not been encouraging. A few minutes of rehearsal, however, speedily converted him."

Eminent as a conductor, Mengelberg is interesting as a man. When he was younger, it used to be said in Germany that he looked like a Rembrandt with a

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cherub face. In private life he is the most simple and unassuming of men. Staying in Lucerne, he has developed a passion for nature and the simple life. He spends the greater part of the summer in Switzerland —at a little chalet in the hills, away from the beaten tourist track. There, as he says, he has caused respectful surprise to the primitive inhabitants by installing an up-to-date bathroom.

He is a great lover of pictures, and is peculiarly expert in the matter of the Dutch painters. Wherever he is, he spends some time in his character of collector and of bargain-hunter. His "extra special" hobby is Eglomisé enamel. During a recent visit to London he looked up a good many of the famous dealers. One dealer who showed him round afterwards inquired where he had his place of business. When he was informed that Mengelberg was a musician he absolutely refused to believe it, saying that he had never met anybody outside the business who knew so much about things in general.

XLVI. EMIL MLYNARSKI

THE SCOTTISH ORCHESTRA HAS HAD many conductors of distinction. Away back in the 'seventies that eccentric genius Hans von Bülow directed the forces at Glasgow and Edinburgh. Then came Sir August Manns, so long associated with the Crystal Palace concerts. Following him there were in turn Dr. Henschel and Sir Frederic Cowen, with an insignificant Dutchman in between. "Variety's the spice of life," says Cowper; and in the matter of their conductors that seems to be the opinion of the directors of the Scottish Orchestra.

Cowen had reigned for a long time, and a change was said to be expedient. Who was to be his successor? The question fell to be decided in 1910. In 1907 a Polish musician, born in Warsaw, had come to London for a concert given by Mischa Elman, at which he was to conduct the London Symphony Orchestra. His name was Emil Mlynarski. He was educated originally as a violinist at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, when Anton Rubinstein was the director. During the many years that Mlynarski performed as a violinist, he was recognised as the favourite and best pupil of his master, Leopold Auer.

After touring the Continent, he settled at Warsaw, and founded the Warsaw Philharmonic Society, which he conducted for four years, at the same time acting as conductor at the local Opera House. Thereafter he was invited to become conductor of the Moscow Phil-

harmonic Society, and also to be one of the conductors of the St. Petersburg Imperial Russian Society.

Following his London appearance of 1907, he conducted several concerts in the metropolis, and on all occasions received the highest praise from the press. He is a conductor of much ability: eloquent and impressive in his interpretations, and inspiring in his command of the orchestra. His "readings" are distinguished by remarkable clearness of phrasing, almost microscopic attention to detail, and keen perception of effect. The members of the Scottish Orchestra are devoted to him, and the musical people of Edinburgh and Glasgow (to say nothing of Continental capitals) do not fail to appreciate his gifts.

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